FULL-LENGTH EXPRESSED GENETIC MARKERS

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to nucleic acid and amino acid sequences of full-length expressed genetic markers and to the use of these sequences in the analysis of human gene expression, genetic linkage, and genetic variability, and in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases linked to altered gene expression.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It is estimated that only 2% of mammalian DNA encodes proteins, and only a small fraction of the genes that encode proteins is actually expressed in a particular cell at any time. The various types of cells in a multicellular organism differ dramatically both in structure and function, and the identity of a particular cell is conferred by its unique pattern of gene expression. In addition, different cell types express overlapping but distinctive sets of genes throughout development. Cell growth and proliferation, cell differentiation, the immune response, apoptosis, and other processes that contribute to organism development and survival are governed by regulation of gene expression. Appropriate gene regulation also ensures that cells function efficiently by expressing only those genes whose functions are required at a given time. Factors that influence gene expression include extracellular signals that mediate cell-cell communication and coordinate the activities of different cell types. Gene expression is regulated at the level of DNA and RNA transcription, and at the level of mRNA translation.

Aberrant expression or mutations in genes and their products may cause, or increase susceptibility to, a variety of human diseases such as cancer and other cell proliferative disorders. The identification of these genes and their products is the basis of an ever-expanding effort to finding markers for early detection of diseases and targets for their prevention and treatment. For example, cancer represents a type of cell proliferative disorder that affects nearly every tissue in the body. The development of cancer, or oncogenesis, is often correlated with the conversion of a normal gene into a cancer-causing gene, or oncogene, through abnormal expression or mutation. Oncoproteins, the products of oncogenes, include a variety of molecules that influence cell proliferation, such as growth factors, growth factor receptors, intracellular signal transducers, nuclear transcription factors, and cell-cycle control proteins. In contrast, tumor-suppressor genes are involved in inhibiting cell proliferation. Mutations which reduce or abrogate the function of tumor-suppressor genes result in aberrant cell proliferation and cancer. Thus a wide variety of genes and their products have been found that are associated with cell proliferative disorders such as cancer, but many more may exist that are yet to be discovered.

DNA-based arrays can provide an efficient, high-throughput method to examine gene expression

and genetic variability. For example, SNPs, or single nucleotide polymorphisms, are the most common type of human genetic variation. DNA-based arrays can dramatically accelerate the discovery of SNPs in hundreds and even thousands of genes. Likewise, such arrays can be used for SNP genotyping in which DNA samples from individuals or populations are assayed for the presence of selected SNPs. These approaches will ultimately lead to the systematic identification of all genetic variations in the human genome and the correlation of certain genetic variations with disease susceptibility, responsiveness to drug treatments, and other medically relevant information. (See, for example, Wang, D. G. et al. (1998) Science 280:1077-1082.)

DNA-based array technology is especially important for the rapid analysis of global gene expression patterns. For example, genetic predisposition, disease, or therapeutic treatment may directly or indirectly affect the expression of a large number of genes in a given tissue. In this case, it is useful to develop a profile, or transcript image, of all the genes that are expressed and the levels at which they are expressed in that particular tissue. A profile generated from an individual or population affected with a certain disease or undergoing a particular therapy may be compared with a profile likewise generated from a control individual or population. Such analysis does not require knowledge of gene function, as the expression profiles can subjected to mathematical analyses which simply treat each gene as a marker. Furthermore, gene expression profiles may help dissect biological pathways by identifying all the genes expressed, for example, at a certain developmental stage, in a particular tissue, or in response to disease or treatment. (See, for example, Lander, E.S. et al. (1996) Science 274:536-539.)

The discovery of new human full-length expressed genetic markers and the polynucleotides encoding them satisfies a need in the art by providing new compositions which are useful in the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of developmental, cell proliferative, and immunological disorders.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention features substantially purified polypeptides, human full-length expressed genetic markers, referred to collectively as "FLEXGEM" and individually as "FLEXGEM-1," "FLEXGEM-2," "FLEXGEM-3," "FLEXGEM-4," "FLEXGEM-5," "FLEXGEM-6," "FLEXGEM-7," "FLEXGEM-8," "FLEXGEM-9," "FLEXGEM-10," "FLEXGEM-11," "FLEXGEM-12," "FLEXGEM-13," "FLEXGEM-14," "FLEXGEM-15," "FLEXGEM-16," "FLEXGEM-17," "FLEXGEM-18," "FLEXGEM-19," and "FLEXGEM-20." In one aspect, the invention provides a substantially purified polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:19, SEQ ID NO:20 (SEQ ID NO:1-20), and fragments thereof.

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The invention also provides an isolated and purified polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-20 and fragments thereof. The invention further provides an isolated and purified polynucleotide having a sequence which is complementary to the polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-20 and fragments thereof.

Additionally, the invention provides a method for detecting a polynucleotide in a sample containing nucleic acids, the method comprising the steps of (a) hybridizing the complement of the polynucleotide sequence to at least one of the polynucleotides of the sample, thereby forming a hybridization complex; and (b) detecting the hybridization complex, wherein the presence of the hybridization complex correlates with the presence of a polynucleotide in the sample. In one aspect, the method further comprises amplifying the polynucleotide prior to hybridization.

The invention further provides an expression vector containing at least a fragment of the polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-20 and fragments thereof. In another aspect, the expression vector is contained within a host cell.

The invention also provides a method for producing a polypeptide, the method comprising the steps of: (a) culturing the host cell containing an expression vector containing at least a fragment of a polynucleotide under conditions suitable for the expression of the polypeptide; and (b) recovering the polypeptide from the host cell culture.

The invention also provides an isolated and purified polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:21, SEQ ID NO:22, SEQ ID NO:23, SEQ ID NO:24, SEQ ID NO:25, SEQ ID NO:26, SEQ ID NO:27, SEQ ID NO:28, SEQ ID NO:29, SEQ ID NO:30, SEQ ID NO:31, SEQ ID NO:32, SEQ ID NO:33, SEQ ID NO:34, SEQ ID NO:35, SEQ ID NO:36, SEQ ID NO:37, SEQ ID NO:38, SEQ ID NO:39, SEQ ID NO:40 (SEQ ID NO:21-40), and fragments thereof. The invention further provides an isolated and purified polynucleotide having a sequence which is complementary to the polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:21-40 and fragments thereof.

The invention also provides a composition for the detection of altered expression of human FLEXGEM polynucleotides comprising at least one of these complementary polynucleotides and a detectable label. Also provided is an isolated and purified polynucleotide which is complementary to at least a fragment of a polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:21-40 and fragments thereof.

The invention further encompasses a microarray containing at least a fragment of at least one of the polynucleotides comprising the polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:21-40, or fragments thereof. Also encompassed is a method for generating a transcript image of a

sample containing nucleic acids, the method comprising the steps of hybridizing the polynucleotides on the microarray containing at least one of the polynucleotides selected from the group comprising SEQ ID NO:21-40, or fragments thereof, to labeled complementary polynucleotides from the sample under conditions suitable for the formation of a hybridization complex, and quantifying the expression level of the polynucleotides encoding the polypeptides in the biological sample.

The invention also provides a pharmaceutical composition comprising a substantially purified polypeptide having the amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-20 and fragments thereof, in conjunction with a suitable pharmaceutical carrier.

The invention further includes a purified antibody which binds to a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-20 and fragments thereof. The invention also provides a purified agonist and a purified antagonist to the polypeptide.

The invention also provides a method for treating or preventing a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of FLEXGEM, the method comprising administering to a subject in need of such treatment an effective amount of a pharmaceutical composition comprising a substantially purified polypeptide having the amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-20 and fragments thereof, in conjunction with a suitable pharmaceutical carrier.

The invention also provides a method for treating or preventing a disorder associated with increased expression or activity of FLEXGEM, the method comprising administering to a subject in need of such treatment an effective amount of an antagonist of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-20 and fragments thereof.

The invention further provides a method for identifying a test compound which specifically binds to a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-20, the method comprising the steps of providing a test compound, combining the polypeptide with the test compound under suitable conditions for a time sufficient to allow binding, and detecting the binding of the polypeptide to the test compound.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE TABLES

Table 1 shows polypeptide and nucleotide sequence identification numbers (SEQ ID NOs), clone identification numbers (clone IDs), cDNA libraries, and cDNA fragments used to assemble full-length sequences encoding FLEXGEM.

Table 2 shows features of each polypeptide sequence, including potential phosphorylation and glycosylation sites.

Table 3 shows useful fragments of each nucleic acid sequence; the tissue-specific expression patterns of each nucleic acid sequence as determined by northern analysis; diseases, disorders, or conditions associated with these tissues; and the vector into which each cDNA was cloned.

Table 4 describes the tissues used to construct the cDNA libraries from which cDNA clones

encoding FLEXGEM were isolated.

Table 5 shows the tools, programs, and algorithms used to analyze FLEXGEM, along with applicable descriptions, references, and threshold parameters.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Before the present proteins, nucleotide sequences, and methods are described, it is understood that this invention is not limited to the particular machines, materials and methods described, as these may vary. It is also to be understood that the terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only, and is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention which will be limited only by the appended claims.

It must be noted that as used herein and in the appended claims, the singular forms "a," "an," and "the" include plural reference unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Thus, for example, a reference to "a host cell" includes a plurality of such host cells, and a reference to "an antibody" is a reference to one or more antibodies and equivalents thereof known to those skilled in the art, and so forth.

Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meanings as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. Although any machines, materials, and methods similar or equivalent to those described herein can be used to practice or test the present invention, the preferred machines, materials and methods are now described. All publications mentioned herein are cited for the purpose of describing and disclosing the cell lines, protocols, reagents and vectors which are reported in the publications and which might be used in connection with the invention. Nothing herein is to be construed as an admission that the invention is not entitled to antedate such disclosure by virtue of prior invention.

DEFINITIONS

"FLEXGEM" refers to the amino acid sequences of substantially purified FLEXGEM obtained from any species, particularly a mammalian species, including bovine, ovine, porcine, murine, equine, and preferably the human species, from any source, whether natural, synthetic, semi-synthetic, or recombinant.

The term "agonist" refers to a molecule which, when bound to FLEXGEM, increases or prolongs the duration of the effect of FLEXGEM. Agonists may include proteins, nucleic acids, carbohydrates, or any other molecules which bind to and modulate the effect of FLEXGEM.

An "allelic variant" is an alternative form of the gene encoding FLEXGEM. Allelic variants may result from at least one mutation in the nucleic acid sequence and may result in altered mRNAs or in polypeptides whose structure or function may or may not be altered. Any given natural or recombinant gene may have none, one, or many allelic forms. Common mutational changes which give rise to allelic variants are generally ascribed to natural deletions, additions, or substitutions of nucleotides. Each of

these types of changes may occur alone, or in combination with the others, one or more times in a given sequence.

"Altered" nucleic acid sequences encoding FLEXGEM include those sequences with deletions, insertions, or substitutions of different nucleotides, resulting in a polynucleotide the same as FLEXGEM or a polypeptide with at least one functional characteristic of FLEXGEM. Included within this definition are polymorphisms which may or may not be readily detectable using a particular oligonucleotide probe of the polynucleotide encoding FLEXGEM, and improper or unexpected hybridization to allelic variants, with a locus other than the normal chromosomal locus for the polynucleotide sequence encoding FLEXGEM. The encoded protein may also be "altered," and may contain deletions, insertions, or substitutions of amino acid residues which produce a silent change and result in a functionally equivalent FLEXGEM. Deliberate amino acid substitutions may be made on the basis of similarity in polarity, charge, solubility, hydrophobicity, hydrophilicity, and/or the amphipathic nature of the residues, as long as the biological or immunological activity of FLEXGEM is retained. For example, negatively charged amino acids may include aspartic acid and glutamic acid, positively charged amino acids may include lysine and arginine, and amino acids with uncharged polar head groups having similar hydrophilicity values may include leucine, isoleucine, and valine; glycine and alanine; asparagine and glutamine; serine and threonine; and phenylalanine and tyrosine.

The terms "amino acid" and "amino acid sequence" refer to an oligopeptide, peptide, polypeptide, or protein sequence, or a fragment of any of these, and to naturally occurring or synthetic molecules. In this context, "fragments," "immunogenic fragments," or "antigenic fragments" refer to fragments of FLEXGEM which are preferably at least 5 to about 15 amino acids in length, most preferably at least 14 amino acids, and which retain some biological activity or immunological activity of FLEXGEM. Where "amino acid sequence" is recited to refer to an amino acid sequence of a naturally occurring protein molecule, "amino acid sequence" and like terms are not meant to limit the amino acid sequence to the complete native amino acid sequence associated with the recited protein molecule.

"Amplification" relates to the production of additional copies of a nucleic acid sequence. Amplification is generally carried out using polymerase chain reaction (PCR) technologies well known in the art.

The term "antagonist" refers to a molecule which, when bound to FLEXGEM, decreases the amount or the duration of the effect of the biological or immunological activity of FLEXGEM. Antagonists may include proteins, nucleic acids, carbohydrates, antibodies, or any other molecules which decrease the effect of FLEXGEM.

The term "antibody" refers to intact molecules as well as to fragments thereof, such as Fab, F(ab')$_2$, and Fv fragments, which are capable of binding the epitopic determinant. Antibodies that bind FLEXGEM polypeptides can be prepared using intact polypeptides or using fragments containing small

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peptides of interest as the immunizing antigen. The polypeptide or oligopeptide used to immunize an animal (e.g., a mouse, a rat, or a rabbit) can be derived from the translation of RNA, or synthesized chemically, and can be conjugated to a carrier protein if desired. Commonly used carriers that are chemically coupled to peptides include bovine serum albumin, thyroglobulin, and keyhole limpet

5   hemocyanin (KLH). The coupled peptide is then used to immunize the animal.

The term "antigenic determinant" refers to that fragment of a molecule (i.e., an epitope) that makes contact with a particular antibody. When a protein or a fragment of a protein is used to immunize a host animal, numerous regions of the protein may induce the production of antibodies which bind specifically to antigenic determinants (given regions or three-dimensional structures on the protein). An

10   antigenic determinant may compete with the intact antigen (i.e., the immunogen used to elicit the immune response) for binding to an antibody.

The term "antisense" refers to any composition containing a nucleic acid sequence which is complementary to the "sense" strand of a specific nucleic acid sequence. Antisense molecules may be produced by any method including synthesis or transcription. Once introduced into a cell, the

15   complementary nucleotides combine with natural sequences produced by the cell to form duplexes and to block either transcription or translation. The designation "negative" can refer to the antisense strand, and the designation "positive" can refer to the sense strand.

The term "biologically active" refers to a protein having structural, regulatory, or biochemical functions of a naturally occurring molecule. Likewise, "immunologically active" refers to the capability of

20   the natural, recombinant, or synthetic FLEXGEM, or of any oligopeptide thereof, to induce a specific immune response in appropriate animals or cells and to bind with specific antibodies.

The terms "complementary" and "complementarity" refer to the natural binding of polynucleotides by base pairing. For example, the sequence "5' A-G-T 3'" bonds to the complementary sequence "3' T-C-A 5'." Complementarity between two single-stranded molecules may be "partial," such that only some

25   of the nucleic acids bind, or it may be "complete," such that total complementarity exists between the single stranded molecules. The degree of complementarity between nucleic acid strands has significant effects on the efficiency and strength of the hybridization between the nucleic acid strands. This is of particular importance in amplification reactions, which depend upon binding between nucleic acids strands, and in the design and use of peptide nucleic acid (PNA) molecules.

30   A "composition comprising a given polynucleotide sequence" and a "composition comprising a given amino acid sequence" refer broadly to any composition containing the given polynucleotide or amino acid sequence. The composition may comprise a dry formulation or an aqueous solution. Compositions comprising polynucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM or fragments of FLEXGEM may be employed as hybridization probes. The probes may be stored in freeze-dried form and may be associated with a

35   stabilizing agent such as a carbohydrate. In hybridizations, the probe may be deployed in an aqueous

solution containing salts (e.g., NaCl), detergents (e.g., sodium dodecyl sulfate; SDS), and other components (e.g., Denhardt's solution, dry milk, salmon sperm DNA, etc.).

"Consensus sequence" refers to a nucleic acid sequence which has been resequenced to resolve uncalled bases, extended using the XL-PCR kit (Perkin-Elmer, Norwalk CT) in the 5' and/or the 3'
5 direction, and resequenced, or which has been assembled from the overlapping sequences of more than one Incyte Clone using a computer program for fragment assembly, such as the GELVIEW fragment assembly system (GCG, Madison WI). Some sequences have been both extended and assembled to produce the consensus sequence.

The term "correlates with expression of a polynucleotide" indicates that the detection of the
10 presence of nucleic acids, the same or related to a nucleic acid sequence encoding FLEXGEM, by northern analysis is indicative of the presence of nucleic acids encoding FLEXGEM in a sample, and thereby correlates with expression of the transcript from the polynucleotide encoding FLEXGEM.

A "deletion" refers to a change in the amino acid or nucleotide sequence that results in the absence of one or more amino acid residues or nucleotides.
15 The term "derivative" refers to the chemical modification of a polypeptide sequence, or a polynucleotide sequence. Chemical modifications of a polynucleotide sequence can include, for example, replacement of hydrogen by an alkyl, acyl, or amino group. A derivative polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide which retains at least one biological or immunological function of the natural molecule. A derivative polypeptide is one modified by glycosylation, pegylation, or any similar process that retains at
20 least one biological or immunological function of the polypeptide from which it was derived.

A "full length" nucleotide sequence is one containing at least a start site for translation to a protein sequence, followed by an open reading frame and a stop site, and encoding a "full length" polypeptide.

The term "similarity" refers to a degree of complementarity. There may be partial similarity or complete similarity. The word "identity" may substitute for the word "similarity." A partially
25 complementary sequence that at least partially inhibits an identical sequence from hybridizing to a target nucleic acid is referred to as "substantially similar." The inhibition of hybridization of the completely complementary sequence to the target sequence may be examined using a hybridization assay (Southern or northern blot, solution hybridization, and the like) under conditions of reduced stringency. A substantially similar sequence or hybridization probe will compete for and inhibit the binding of a
30 completely similar (identical) sequence to the target sequence under conditions of reduced stringency. This is not to say that conditions of reduced stringency are such that non-specific binding is permitted, as reduced stringency conditions require that the binding of two sequences to one another be a specific (i.e., a selective) interaction. The absence of non-specific binding may be tested by the use of a second target sequence which lacks even a partial degree of complementarity (e.g., less than about 30% similarity or
35 identity). In the absence of non-specific binding, the substantially similar sequence or probe will not

hybridize to the second non-complementary target sequence.

The phrases "percent identity" and "% identity" refer to the percentage of sequence similarity found in a comparison of two or more amino acid or nucleic acid sequences. Percent identity can be determined electronically, e.g., by using the MEGALIGN program (DNASTAR, Madison WI) which creates alignments between two or more sequences according to methods selected by the user, e.g., the clustal method. (See, e.g., Higgins, D.G. and P.M. Sharp (1988) Gene 73:237-244.) Parameters for each method may be the default parameters provided by MEGALIGN or may be specified by the user. The clustal algorithm groups sequences into clusters by examining the distances between all pairs. The clusters are aligned pairwise and then in groups. The percentage similarity between two amino acid sequences, e.g., sequence A and sequence B, is calculated by dividing the length of sequence A, minus the number of gap residues in sequence A, minus the number of gap residues in sequence B, into the sum of the residue matches between sequence A and sequence B, times one hundred. Gaps of low or of no similarity between the two amino acid sequences are not included in determining percentage similarity. Percent identity between nucleic acid sequences can also be counted or calculated by other methods known in the art, e.g., the Jotun Hein method. (See, e.g., Hein, J. (1990) Methods Enzymol. 183:626-645.) Identity between sequences can also be determined by other methods known in the art, e.g., by varying hybridization conditions.

"Human artificial chromosomes" (HACs) are linear microchromosomes which may contain DNA sequences of about 6 kb to 10 Mb in size, and which contain all of the elements required for stable mitotic chromosome segregation and maintenance.

The term "humanized antibody" refers to antibody molecules in which the amino acid sequence in the non-antigen binding regions has been altered so that the antibody more closely resembles a human antibody, and still retains its original binding ability.

"Hybridization" refers to any process by which a strand of nucleic acid binds with a complementary strand through base pairing.

The term "hybridization complex" refers to a complex formed between two nucleic acid sequences by virtue of the formation of hydrogen bonds between complementary bases. A hybridization complex may be formed in solution (e.g., C_0t or R_0t analysis) or formed between one nucleic acid sequence present in solution and another nucleic acid sequence immobilized on a solid support (e.g., paper, membranes, filters, chips, pins or glass slides, or any other appropriate substrate to which cells or their nucleic acids have been fixed).

The words "insertion" and "addition" refer to changes in an amino acid or nucleotide sequence resulting in the addition of one or more amino acid residues or nucleotides, respectively, to the sequence found in the naturally occurring molecule.

"Immune response" can refer to conditions associated with inflammation, trauma, immune

disorders, or infectious or genetic disease, etc. These conditions can be characterized by expression of various factors, e.g., cytokines, chemokines, and other signaling molecules, which may affect cellular and systemic defense systems.

The term "microarray" refers to an arrangement of distinct polynucleotides on a substrate.

5 The terms "element" and "array element" in a microarray context, refer to hybridizable polynucleotides arranged on the surface of a substrate.

The term "modulate" refers to a change in the activity of FLEXGEM. For example, modulation may cause an increase or a decrease in protein activity, binding characteristics, or any other biological, functional, or immunological properties of FLEXGEM.

10 The phrases "nucleic acid" and "nucleic acid sequence" refer to a nucleotide, oligonucleotide, polynucleotide, or any fragment thereof. These phrases also refer to DNA or RNA of genomic or synthetic origin which may be single-stranded or double-stranded and may represent the sense or the antisense strand, to peptide nucleic acid (PNA), or to any DNA-like or RNA-like material. In this context, "fragments" refers to those nucleic acid sequences which, when translated, would produce
15 polypeptides retaining some functional characteristic, e.g., antigenicity, or structural domain characteristic, e.g., ATP-binding site, of the full-length polypeptide.

The terms "operably associated" and "operably linked" refer to functionally related nucleic acid sequences. A promoter is operably associated or operably linked with a coding sequence if the promoter controls the translation of the encoded polypeptide. While operably associated or operably linked nucleic
20 acid sequences can be contiguous and in the same reading frame, certain genetic elements, e.g., repressor genes, are not contiguously linked to the sequence encoding the polypeptide but still bind to operator sequences that control expression of the polypeptide.

The term "oligonucleotide" refers to a nucleic acid sequence of at least about 6 nucleotides to 60 nucleotides, preferably about 15 to 30 nucleotides, and most preferably about 20 to 25 nucleotides, which
25 can be used in PCR amplification or in a hybridization assay or microarray. "Oligonucleotide" is substantially equivalent to the terms "amplimer," "primer," "oligomer," and "probe," as these terms are commonly defined in the art.

"Peptide nucleic acid" (PNA) refers to an antisense molecule or anti-gene agent which comprises an oligonucleotide of at least about 5 nucleotides in length linked to a peptide backbone of amino acid
30 residues ending in lysine. The terminal lysine confers solubility to the composition. PNAs preferentially bind complementary single stranded DNA or RNA and stop transcript elongation, and may be pegylated to extend their lifespan in the cell.

The term "sample" is used in its broadest sense. A sample suspected of containing nucleic acids encoding FLEXGEM, or fragments thereof, or FLEXGEM itself, may comprise a bodily fluid; an extract
35 from a cell, chromosome, organelle, or membrane isolated from a cell; a cell; genomic DNA, RNA, or

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cDNA, in solution or bound to a substrate; a tissue; a tissue print; etc.

The terms "specific binding" and "specifically binding" refer to that interaction between a protein or peptide and an agonist, an antibody, or an antagonist. The interaction is dependent upon the presence of a particular structure of the protein, e.g., the antigenic determinant or epitope, recognized by the binding molecule. For example, if an antibody is specific for epitope "A," the presence of a polypeptide containing the epitope A, or the presence of free unlabeled A, in a reaction containing free labeled A and the antibody will reduce the amount of labeled A that binds to the antibody.

The term "stringent conditions" refers to conditions which permit hybridization between polynucleotides and the claimed polynucleotides. Stringent conditions can be defined by salt concentration, the concentration of organic solvent, e.g., formamide, temperature, and other conditions well known in the art. In particular, stringency can be increased by reducing the concentration of salt, increasing the concentration of formamide, or raising the hybridization temperature.

The term "substantially purified" refers to nucleic acid or amino acid sequences that are removed from their natural environment and are isolated or separated, and are at least about 60% free, preferably about 75% free, and most preferably about 90% free from other components with which they are naturally associated.

A "substitution" refers to the replacement of one or more amino acids or nucleotides by different amino acids or nucleotides, respectively.

"Substrate" refers to any suitable rigid or semi-rigid support including membranes, filters, chips, slides, wafers, fibers, magnetic or nonmagnetic beads, gels, tubing, plates, polymers, microparticles and capillaries. The substrate can have a variety of surface forms, such as wells, trenches, pins, channels and pores, to which polynucleotides or polypeptides are bound.

A "transcript image" refers to the collective pattern of gene expression by a particular tissue or cell type under given conditions at a given time.

"Transformation" describes a process by which exogenous DNA enters and changes a recipient cell. Transformation may occur under natural or artificial conditions according to various methods well known in the art, and may rely on any known method for the insertion of foreign nucleic acid sequences into a prokaryotic or eukaryotic host cell. The method for transformation is selected based on the type of host cell being transformed and may include, but is not limited to, viral infection, electroporation, heat shock, lipofection, and particle bombardment. The term "transformed" cells includes stably transformed cells in which the inserted DNA is capable of replication either as an autonomously replicating plasmid or as part of the host chromosome, as well as transiently transformed cells which express the inserted DNA or RNA for limited periods of time.

A "variant" of FLEXGEM polypeptides refers to an amino acid sequence that is altered by one or more amino acid residues. The variant may have "conservative" changes, wherein a substituted amino

acid has similar structural or chemical properties (e.g., replacement of leucine with isoleucine). More rarely, a variant may have "nonconservative" changes (e.g., replacement of glycine with tryptophan). Analogous minor variations may also include amino acid deletions or insertions, or both. Guidance in determining which amino acid residues may be substituted, inserted, or deleted without abolishing

5   biological or immunological activity may be found using computer programs well known in the art, for example, LASERGENE software (DNASTAR).

The term "variant," when used in the context of a polynucleotide sequence, may encompass a polynucleotide sequence related to FLEXGEM. This definition may also include, for example, "allelic" (as defined above), "splice," "species," or "polymorphic" variants. A splice variant may have significant

10   identity to a reference molecule, but will generally have a greater or lesser number of polynucleotides due to alternate splicing of exons during mRNA processing. The corresponding polypeptide may possess additional functional domains or an absence of domains. Species variants are polynucleotide sequences that vary from one species to another. The resulting polypeptides generally will have significant amino acid identity relative to each other. A polymorphic variant is a variation in the polynucleotide sequence of

15   a particular gene between individuals of a given species. Polymorphic variants also may encompass "single nucleotide polymorphisms" (SNPs) in which the polynucleotide sequence varies by one base. The presence of SNPs may be indicative of, for example, a certain population, a disease state, or a propensity for a disease state.

THE INVENTION

20   The invention is based on the discovery of new human full-length expressed genetic markers (FLEXGEM), the polynucleotides encoding FLEXGEM, and the use of these compositions for the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of developmental, cell proliferative, and immunological disorders.

Table 1 lists the Incyte clones used to assemble full length nucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM. Columns 1 and 2 show the sequence identification numbers (SEQ ID NOs) of the

25   polypeptide and nucleotide sequences, respectively. Column 3 shows the clone IDs of the Incyte clones in which nucleic acids encoding each FLEXGEM were identified, and column 4 shows the cDNA libraries from which these clones were isolated. Column 5 shows Incyte clones and their corresponding cDNA libraries. Clones for which cDNA libraries are not indicated were derived from pooled cDNA libraries. The clones in column 5 were used to assemble the consensus nucleotide sequence of each FLEXGEM

30   and are useful as fragments in hybridization technologies.

The columns of Table 2 show various properties of each of the polypeptides of the invention: column 1 references the SEQ ID NO; column 2 shows the number of amino acid residues in each polypeptide; column 3 shows potential phosphorylation sites, and column 4 shows potential glycosylation sites.

35   The columns of Table 3 show the tissue-specificity and diseases, disorders, or conditions

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associated with nucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM. The first column of Table 3 lists the nucleotide SEQ ID NOs. Column 2 lists fragments of the nucleotide sequences of column 1. These fragments are useful, for example, in hybridization or amplification technologies to identify SEQ ID NO:21-40 and to distinguish between SEQ ID NO:21-40 and related polynucleotide sequences. The

5   polypeptides encoded by the indicated fragments of SEQ ID NO:21, SEQ ID NO:23-34, 36, 37, and SEQ ID NO:39-40 are useful, for example, as immunogenic peptides. Column 3 lists tissue categories which express FLEXGEM as a fraction of total tissues expressing FLEXGEM. Column 4 lists diseases, disorders, or conditions associated with those tissues expressing FLEXGEM as a fraction of total tissues expressing FLEXGEM. Column 5 lists the vectors used to subclone each cDNA library.

10   The columns of Table 4 show descriptions of the tissues used to construct the cDNA libraries from which cDNA clones encoding FLEXGEM were isolated. Column 1 references the nucleotide SEQ ID NOs, column 2 shows the cDNA libraries from which these clones were isolated, and column 3 shows the tissue origins and other descriptive information relevant to the cDNA libraries in column 2.

       The invention incorporates the nucleic acid sequences disclosed in the Sequence Listing and the

15   use of these sequences in the diagnosis and treatment of disease states characterized by altered expression of FLEXGEM genes or defects in FLEXGEM protein function. The invention further utilizes these sequences in hybridization and amplification technologies, and in particular, in technologies which comprehensively assess gene expression patterns correlated with specific cells or tissues and their responses in vivo or in vitro to pharmaceutical agents, toxins, and other treatments. In this manner, the

20   sequences of the present invention are used to develop a transcript image for a particular cell or tissue.

       The invention also encompasses polynucleotides which encode FLEXGEM. In a particular embodiment, the invention encompasses a polynucleotide sequence comprising a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:21-40, which encodes FLEXGEM.

       It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that as a result of the degeneracy of the genetic

25   code, a multitude of polynucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM, some bearing minimal similarity to the polynucleotide sequences of any known and naturally occurring gene, may be produced. Thus, the invention contemplates each and every possible variation of polynucleotide sequence that could be made by selecting combinations based on possible codon choices. These combinations are made in accordance with the standard triplet genetic code as applied to the polynucleotide sequence of naturally occurring

30   FLEXGEM, and all such variations are to be considered as being specifically disclosed.

       Although nucleotide sequences which encode FLEXGEM and its variants are preferably capable of hybridizing to the nucleotide sequence of the naturally occurring FLEXGEM under appropriately selected conditions of stringency, it may be advantageous to produce nucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM or its derivatives possessing a substantially different codon usage, e.g., inclusion of non-

35   naturally occurring codons. Codons may be selected to increase the rate at which expression of the

peptide occurs in a particular prokaryotic or eukaryotic host in accordance with the frequency with which particular codons are utilized by the host. Other reasons for substantially altering the nucleotide sequence encoding FLEXGEM and its derivatives without altering the encoded amino acid sequences include the production of RNA transcripts having more desirable properties, such as a greater half-life, than
5   transcripts produced from the naturally occurring sequence.

The invention also encompasses production of DNA sequences which encode FLEXGEM and FLEXGEM derivatives, or fragments thereof, entirely by synthetic chemistry. After production, the synthetic sequence may be inserted into any of the many available expression vectors and cell systems using reagents well known in the art. Moreover, synthetic chemistry may be used to introduce mutations
10   into a sequence encoding FLEXGEM or any fragment thereof.

Hybridization

Also encompassed by the invention are polynucleotide sequences that are capable of hybridizing to the claimed polynucleotide sequences, and, in particular, to those shown in SEQ ID NO:21-40 and fragments thereof under various conditions of stringency. (See, e.g., Wahl, G.M. and S.L. Berger (1987)
15   Methods Enzymol. 152:399-407; Kimmel, A.R. (1987) Methods Enzymol. 152:507-511.) For example, stringent salt concentration will ordinarily be less than about 750 mM NaCl and 75 mM trisodium citrate, preferably less than about 500 mM NaCl and 50 mM trisodium citrate, and most preferably less than about 250 mM NaCl and 25 mM trisodium citrate. Low stringency hybridization can be obtained in the absence of organic solvent, e.g., formamide, while high stringency hybridization can be obtained in the
20   presence of at least about 35% formamide, and most preferably at least about 50% formamide. Stringent temperature conditions will ordinarily include temperatures of at least about 30°C, more preferably of at least about 37°C, and most preferably of at least about 42°C. Varying additional parameters, such as hybridization time, the concentration of detergent, e.g., sodium dodecyl sulfate (SDS), and the inclusion or exclusion of carrier DNA, are well known to those skilled in the art. Various levels of stringency are
25   accomplished by combining these various conditions as needed. In a preferred embodiment, hybridization will occur at 30°C in 750 mM NaCl, 75 mM trisodium citrate, and 1% SDS. In a more preferred embodiment, hybridization will occur at 37°C in 500 mM NaCl, 50 mM trisodium citrate, 1% SDS, 35% formamide, and 100 μg/ml denatured salmon sperm DNA (ssDNA). In a most preferred embodiment, hybridization will occur at 42°C in 250 mM NaCl, 25 mM trisodium citrate, 1% SDS, 50 % formamide,
30   and 200 μg/ml ssDNA. Useful variations on these conditions will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art.

The washing steps which follow hybridization can also vary in stringency. Wash stringency conditions can be defined by salt concentration and by temperature. As above, wash stringency can be increased by decreasing salt concentration or by increasing temperature. For example, stringent salt
35   concentration for the wash steps will preferably be less than about 30 mM NaCl and 3 mM trisodium

citrate, and most preferably less than about 15 mM NaCl and 1.5 mM trisodium citrate. Stringent temperature conditions for the wash steps will ordinarily include temperature of at least about 25°C, more preferably of at least about 42°C, and most preferably of at least about 68°C. In a preferred embodiment, wash steps will occur at 25°C in 30 mM NaCl, 3 mM trisodium citrate, and 0.1% SDS. In a more

5   preferred embodiment, wash steps will occur at 42°C in 15 mM NaCl, 1.5 mM trisodium citrate, and 0.1% SDS. In a most preferred embodiment, wash steps will occur at 68°C in 15 mM NaCl, 1.5 mM trisodium citrate, and 0.1% SDS. Additional variations on these conditions will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art.

cDNA Sequencing

10   Methods for DNA sequencing are well known in the art and may be used to practice any of the embodiments of the invention. The methods may employ such enzymes as the Klenow fragment of DNA polymerase I, SEQUENASE (US Biochemical, Cleveland OH), Taq polymerase (Perkin-Elmer), thermostable T7 polymerase (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech, Piscataway NJ), or combinations of polymerases and proofreading exonucleases such as those found in the ELONGASE amplification system

15   (Life Technologies, Gaithersburg MD). Preferably, sequence preparation is automated with machines such as the MICROLAB 2200 liquid transfer system (Hamilton, Reno NV), PTC200 thermal cycler (MJ Research, Watertown MA) and ABI CATALYST 800 thermal cycler (Perkin-Elmer). Sequencing is then carried out using either the ABI 373 or 377 DNA sequencing system (Perkin-Elmer), the MEGABACE 1000 DNA sequencing system (Molecular Dynamics, Sunnyvale CA), or other systems

20   known in the art. The resulting sequences are analyzed using a variety of algorithms which are well known in the art. (See, e.g., Ausubel, F.M. (1997) Short Protocols in Molecular Biology, John Wiley & Sons, New York NY, unit 7.7; Meyers, R.A. (1995) Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Wiley VCH, New York NY, pp. 856-853.)

The nucleic acid sequences encoding FLEXGEM may be extended utilizing a partial nucleotide

25   sequence and employing various PCR-based methods known in the art to detect upstream sequences, such as promoters and regulatory elements. For example, one method which may be employed, restriction-site PCR, uses universal and nested primers to amplify unknown sequence from genomic DNA within a cloning vector. (See, e.g., Sarkar, G. (1993) PCR Methods Applic. 2:318-322.) Another method, inverse PCR, uses primers that extend in divergent directions to amplify unknown sequence from a

30   circularized template. The template is derived from restriction fragments comprising a known genomic locus and surrounding sequences. (See, e.g., Triglia, T. et al. (1988) Nucleic Acids Res. 16:8186.) A third method, capture PCR, involves PCR amplification of DNA fragments adjacent to known sequences in human and yeast artificial chromosome DNA. (See, e.g., Lagerstrom, M. et al. (1991) PCR Methods Applic. 1:111-119.) In this method, multiple restriction enzyme digestions and ligations may be used to

35   insert an engineered double-stranded sequence into a region of unknown sequence before performing

PCR. Other methods which may be used to retrieve unknown sequences are known in the art. (See, e.g., Parker, J.D. et al. (1991) Nucleic Acids Res. 19:3055-306). Additionally, one may use PCR, nested primers, and PROMOTERFINDER libraries (Clontech, Palo Alto CA) to walk genomic DNA. This procedure avoids the need to screen libraries and is useful in finding intron/exon junctions. For all PCR-

5   based methods, primers may be designed using commercially available software, such as OLIGO 4.06 Primer Analysis software (National Biosciences, Plymouth MN) or another appropriate program, to be about 22 to 30 nucleotides in length, to have a GC content of about 50% or more, and to anneal to the template at temperatures about 68°C to 72°C.

When screening for full-length cDNAs, it is preferable to use libraries that have been

10   size-selected to include larger cDNAs. In addition, random-primed libraries, which often include sequences containing the 5' regions of genes, are preferable for situations in which an oligo d(T) library does not yield a full-length cDNA. Genomic libraries may be useful for extension of sequence into 5' non-transcribed regulatory regions.

Capillary electrophoresis systems which are commercially available may be used to analyze the

15   size or confirm the nucleotide sequence of sequencing or PCR products. In particular, capillary sequencing may employ flowable polymers for electrophoretic separation, four different nucleotide-specific, laser-stimulated fluorescent dyes, and a charge coupled device camera for detection of the emitted wavelengths. Output/light intensity may be converted to electrical signal using appropriate software (e.g., GENOTYPER and SEQUENCE NAVIGATOR, Perkin-Elmer), and the entire process

20   from loading of samples to computer analysis and electronic data display may be computer controlled. Capillary electrophoresis is especially preferable for sequencing small DNA fragments which may be present in limited amounts in a particular sample.

cDNA Expression

In another embodiment of the invention, polynucleotide sequences or fragments thereof which

25   encode FLEXGEM may be cloned in recombinant DNA molecules that direct expression of FLEXGEM, or fragments or functional equivalents thereof, in appropriate host cells. Due to the inherent degeneracy of the genetic code, other DNA sequences which encode substantially the same or a functionally equivalent amino acid sequence may be produced and used to express FLEXGEM.

The nucleotide sequences of the present invention can be engineered using methods generally

30   known in the art in order to alter FLEXGEM-encoding sequences for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, modification of the cloning, processing, and/or expression of the gene product. DNA shuffling by random fragmentation and PCR reassembly of gene fragments and synthetic oligonucleotides may be used to engineer the nucleotide sequences. For example, oligonucleotide-mediated site-directed mutagenesis may be used to introduce mutations that create new restriction sites, alter glycosylation

35   patterns, change codon preference, produce splice variants, and so forth.

In another embodiment, sequences encoding FLEXGEM may be synthesized, in whole or in part, using chemical methods well known in the art. (See, e.g., Caruthers, M.H. et al. (1980) Nucl. Acids Res. Symp. Ser. 7:215-223, and Horn, T. et al. (1980) Nucl. Acids Res. Symp. Ser. 7:225-232.) Alternatively, FLEXGEM itself or a fragment thereof may be synthesized using chemical methods. For example,

5   peptide synthesis can be performed using various solid-phase techniques. (See, e.g., Roberge, J.Y. et al. (1995) Science 269:202-204.) Automated synthesis may be achieved using the ABI 431A peptide synthesizer (Perkin-Elmer). Additionally, the amino acid sequence of FLEXGEM, or any part thereof, may be altered during direct synthesis and/or combined with sequences from other proteins, or any part thereof, to produce a variant polypeptide.

10   The peptide may be substantially purified by preparative high performance liquid chromatography. (See, e.g, Chiez, R.M. and F.Z. Regnier (1990) Methods Enzymol. 182:392-421.) The composition of the synthetic peptides may be confirmed by amino acid analysis or by sequencing. (See, e.g., Creighton, T. (1984) Proteins, Structures and Molecular Properties, WH Freeman, New York NY.)

In order to express a biologically active FLEXGEM, the nucleotide sequences encoding

15   FLEXGEM or derivatives thereof may be inserted into an appropriate expression vector, i.e., a vector which contains the necessary elements for transcriptional and translational control of the inserted coding sequence in a suitable host. These elements include regulatory sequences, such as enhancers, constitutive and inducible promoters, and 5' and 3' untranslated regions in the vector and in polynucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM. Such elements may vary in their strength and specificity. Specific initiation signals

20   may also be used to achieve more efficient translation of sequences encoding FLEXGEM. Such signals include the ATG initiation codon and adjacent sequences, e.g. the Kozak sequence. In cases where sequences encoding FLEXGEM and its initiation codon and upstream regulatory sequences are inserted into the appropriate expression vector, no additional transcriptional or translational control signals may be needed. However, in cases where only coding sequence, or a fragment thereof, is inserted, exogenous

25   translational control signals including an in-frame ATG initiation codon should be provided by the vector. Exogenous translational elements and initiation codons may be of various origins, both natural and synthetic. The efficiency of expression may be enhanced by the inclusion of enhancers appropriate for the particular host cell system used. (See, e.g., Scharf, D. et al. (1994) Results Probl. Cell Differ. 20:125-162.)

30   Methods which are well known to those skilled in the art may be used to construct expression vectors containing sequences encoding FLEXGEM and appropriate transcriptional and translational control elements. These methods include in vitro recombinant DNA techniques, synthetic techniques, and in vivo genetic recombination. (See, e.g., Sambrook, J. et al. (1989) Molecular Cloning, A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Press, Plainview NY, ch. 4, 8, and 16-17; Ausubel, F.M. et al. (1995)

35   Current Protocols in Molecular Biology, John Wiley & Sons, New York NY, ch. 9, 13, and 16.)

A variety of expression vector/host systems may be utilized to contain and express sequences encoding FLEXGEM. These include, but are not limited to, microorganisms such as bacteria transformed with recombinant bacteriophage, plasmid, or cosmid DNA expression vectors; yeast transformed with yeast expression vectors; insect cell systems infected with viral expression vectors (e.g., baculovirus);

5 plant cell systems transformed with viral expression vectors (e.g., cauliflower mosaic virus, CaMV, or tobacco mosaic virus,TMV) or with bacterial expression vectors (e.g., Ti or pBR322 plasmids); or animal cell systems. The invention is not limited by the host cell employed.

In bacterial systems, a number of cloning and expression vectors may be selected depending upon the use intended for polynucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM. For example, routine cloning,

10 subcloning, and propagation of polynucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM can be achieved using a multifunctional _E. coli_ vector such as PBLUESCRIPT (Stratagene, La Jolla CA) or pSPORT1 plasmid (Life Technologies). Ligation of sequences encoding FLEXGEM into the vector's multiple cloning site disrupts the _lac_Z gene, allowing a colorimetric screening procedure for identification of transformed bacteria containing recombinant molecules. In addition, these vectors may be useful for in vitro

15 transcription, dideoxy sequencing, single strand rescue with helper phage, and creation of nested deletions in the cloned sequence. (See, e.g., Van Heeke, G. and S.M. Schuster (1989) J. Biol. Chem. 264:5503-5509.) When large quantities of FLEXGEM are needed, e.g. for the production of antibodies, vectors which direct high level expression of FLEXGEM may be used. For example, vectors containing the strong, inducible T5 or T7 bacteriophage promoter may be used.

20 Yeast expression systems may be used for production of FLEXGEM. A number of vectors containing constitutive or inducible promoters, such as alpha factor, alcohol oxidase, and PGH promoters, may be used in the yeast Saccharomyces cerevisiae or Pichia pastoris. In addition, such vectors direct either the secretion or intracellular retention of expressed proteins and enable integration of foreign sequences into the host genome for stable propagation. (See, e.g., Ausubel, 1995, supra; Grant et al.

25 (1987) Methods Enzymol. 153:516-54; and Scorer, C. A. et al. (1994) Bio/Technology 12:181-184.)

Plant systems may also be used for expression of FLEXGEM. Transcription of sequences encoding FLEXGEM may be driven viral promoters, e.g., the 35S and 19S promoters of CaMV used alone or in combination with the omega leader sequence from TMV (Takamatsu, N. (1987) EMBO J. 6:307-311). Alternatively, plant promoters such as the small subunit of RUBISCO or heat shock

30 promoters may be used. (See, e.g., Coruzzi, G. et al. (1984) EMBO J. 3:1671-1680; Broglie, R. et al. (1984) Science 224:838-843; and Winter, J. et al. (1991) Results Probl. Cell Differ. 17:85-105.) These constructs can be introduced into plant cells by direct DNA transformation or pathogen-mediated transfection. (See, e.g., The McGraw Hill Yearbook of Science and Technology (1992) McGraw Hill, New York NY, pp. 191-196.)

35 In mammalian cells, a number of viral-based expression systems may be utilized. In cases where

an adenovirus is used as an expression vector, sequences encoding FLEXGEM may be ligated into an adenovirus transcription/translation complex consisting of the late promoter and tripartite leader sequence. Insertion in a non-essential E1 or E3 region of the viral genome may be used to obtain infective virus which expresses FLEXGEM in host cells. (See, e.g., Logan, J. and T. Shenk (1984) Proc. Natl. Acad.

5   Sci. 81:3655-3659.) In addition, transcription enhancers, such as the Rous sarcoma virus (RSV) enhancer, may be used to increase expression in mammalian host cells. SV40 or EBV-based vectors may also be used for high-level protein expression.

Human artificial chromosomes (HACs) may also be employed to deliver larger fragments of DNA than can be contained in and expressed from a plasmid. HACs of about 6 kb to 10 Mb are

10 constructed and delivered via conventional delivery methods (liposomes, polycationic amino polymers, or vesicles) for therapeutic purposes. (See, e.g., Harrington, J.J. et al. (1997) Nat. Genet. 15:345-355.)

For long term production of recombinant proteins in mammalian systems, stable expression of FLEXGEM in cell lines is preferred. For example, sequences encoding FLEXGEM can be transformed into cell lines using expression vectors which may contain viral origins of replication and/or endogenous

15 expression elements and a selectable marker gene on the same or on a separate vector. Following the introduction of the vector, cells may be allowed to grow for about 1 to 2 days in enriched media before being switched to selective media. The purpose of the selectable marker is to confer resistance to a selective agent, and its presence allows growth and recovery of cells which successfully express the introduced sequences. Resistant clones of stably transformed cells may be propagated using tissue

20 culture techniques appropriate to the cell type.

Any number of selection systems may be used to recover transformed cell lines. These include, but are not limited to, the herpes simplex virus thymidine kinase and adenine phosphoribosyltransferase genes, for use in tk^- or apr^- cells, respectively. (See, e.g., Wigler, M. et al. (1977) Cell 11:223-232; Lowy, I. et al. (1980) Cell 22:817-823.) Also, antimetabolite, antibiotic, or herbicide resistance can be used as the

25 basis for selection. For example, *dhfr* confers resistance to methotrexate; *neo* confers resistance to the aminoglycosides neomycin and G-418; and *als* or *pat* confer resistance to chlorsulfuron and phosphinotricin acetyltransferase, respectively. (See, e.g., Wigler, M. et al. (1980) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 77:3567-3570; Colbere-Garapin, F. et al. (1981) J. Mol. Biol. 150:1-14.) Additional selectable genes have been described, e.g., *trpB* and *hisD*, which alter cellular requirements for metabolites. (See, e.g.,

30 Hartman, S.C. and R.C. Mulligan (1988) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 85:8047-8051.) Visible markers, e.g., anthocyanins, green fluorescent proteins (GFP; Clontech), ß glucuronidase and its substrate ß-glucuronide, or luciferase and its substrate luciferin may be used. These markers can be used not only to identify transformants, but also to quantify the amount of transient or stable protein expression attributable to a specific vector system. (See, e.g., Rhodes, C.A. (1995) Methods Mol. Biol. 55:121-131.)

35 Although the presence/absence of marker gene expression suggests that the gene of interest is

also present, the presence and expression of the gene may need to be confirmed. For example, if the sequence encoding FLEXGEM is inserted within a marker gene sequence, transformed cells containing sequences encoding FLEXGEM can be identified by the absence of marker gene function. Alternatively, a marker gene can be placed in tandem with a sequence encoding FLEXGEM under the control of a

5   single promoter. Expression of the marker gene in response to induction or selection usually indicates expression of the tandem gene as well.

In general, host cells that contain the nucleic acid sequence encoding FLEXGEM and that express FLEXGEM may be identified by a variety of procedures known to those of skill in the art. These procedures include, but are not limited to, DNA-DNA or DNA-RNA hybridizations, PCR amplification,

10   and protein bioassay or immunoassay techniques which include membrane, solution, or chip based technologies for the detection and/or quantification of nucleic acid or protein sequences.

Immunological methods for detecting and measuring the expression of FLEXGEM using either specific polyclonal or monoclonal antibodies are known in the art. Examples of such techniques include enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISAs), radioimmunoassays (RIAs), and fluorescence activated

15   cell sorting (FACS). A two-site, monoclonal-based immunoassay utilizing monoclonal antibodies reactive to two non-interfering epitopes on FLEXGEM is preferred, but a competitive binding assay may be employed. These and other assays are well known in the art. (See, e.g., Hampton, R. et al. (1990) Serological Methods, a Laboratory Manual, APS Press, St Paul MN, Sect. IV; Coligan, J. E. et al. (1997) Current Protocols in Immunology, Greene Pub. Associates and Wiley-Interscience, New York NY; and

20   Pound, J.D. (1998) Immunochemical Protocols, Humana Press, Totowa NJ).

A wide variety of labels and conjugation techniques are known by those skilled in the art and may be used in various nucleic acid and amino acid assays. Means for producing labeled hybridization or PCR probes for detecting sequences related to polynucleotides encoding FLEXGEM include oligolabeling, nick translation, end-labeling, or PCR amplification using a labeled nucleotide. Alternatively, the sequences

25   encoding FLEXGEM, or any fragments thereof, may be cloned into a vector for the production of an mRNA probe. Such vectors are known in the art, are commercially available, and may be used to synthesize RNA probes in vitro by addition of an appropriate RNA polymerase such as T7, T3, or SP6 and labeled nucleotides. These procedures may be conducted using a variety of commercially available kits, such as those provided by Amersham Pharmacia Biotech, Promega (Madison WI), and US

30   Biochemical. Suitable reporter molecules or labels which may be used for ease of detection include radionuclides, enzymes, fluorescent, chemiluminescent, or chromogenic agents, as well as substrates, cofactors, inhibitors, magnetic particles, and the like.

Host cells transformed with nucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM may be cultured under conditions suitable for the expression and recovery of the protein from cell culture. The protein produced

35   by a transformed cell may be secreted or retained intracellularly depending on the sequence and/or the

vector used. As will be understood by those of skill in the art, expression vectors containing polynucleotides which encode FLEXGEM may be designed to contain signal sequences which direct secretion of FLEXGEM through a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell membrane.

In addition, a host cell strain may be chosen for its ability to modulate expression of the inserted sequences or to process the expressed protein in the desired fashion. Such modifications of the polypeptide include, but are not limited to, acetylation, carboxylation, glycosylation, phosphorylation, lipidation, and acylation. Post-translational processing which cleaves a "prepro" form of the protein may also be used to specify protein targeting, folding, and/or activity. Different host cells which have specific cellular machinery and characteristic mechanisms for post-translational activities (e.g., CHO, HeLa, MDCK, HEK293, and WI38) are available from the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC, Bethesda MD) and may be chosen to ensure the correct modification and processing of the foreign protein.

In another embodiment of the invention, natural, modified, or recombinant nucleic acid sequences encoding FLEXGEM may be ligated to a heterologous sequence resulting in translation of a fusion protein in any of the aforementioned host systems. For example, a chimeric FLEXGEM protein containing a heterologous moiety that can be recognized by a commercially available antibody may facilitate the screening of peptide libraries for inhibitors of FLEXGEM activity. Heterologous protein and peptide moieties may also facilitate purification of fusion proteins using commercially available affinity matrices. Such moieties include, but are not limited to, glutathione S-transferase (GST), maltose binding protein (MBP), thioredoxin (Trx), calmodulin binding peptide (CBP), 6-His, FLAG, *c-myc*, and hemagglutinin (HA). GST, MBP, Trx, CBP, and 6-His enable purification of their cognate fusion proteins on immobilized glutathione, maltose, phenylarsine oxide, calmodulin, and metal-chelate resins, respectively. FLAG, *c-myc*, and hemagglutinin (HA) enable immunoaffinity purification of fusion proteins using commercially available monoclonal and polyclonal antibodies that specifically recognize these epitope tags. A fusion protein may also be engineered to contain a proteolytic cleavage site located between the FLEXGEM encoding sequence and the heterologous protein sequence, so that FLEXGEM may be cleaved away from the heterologous moiety following purification. Methods for fusion protein expression and purification are discussed in Ausubel (1995, supra, ch 10). A variety of commercially available kits may also be used to facilitate expression and purification of fusion proteins.

In a further embodiment of the invention, synthesis of radiolabeled FLEXGEM may be achieved in vitro using the TNT rabbit reticulocyte lysate or wheat germ extract systems (Promega). These systems couple transcription and translation of protein-coding sequences operably associated with the T7, T3, or SP6 promoters. Translation takes place in the presence of a radiolabeled amino acid precursor, preferably ^{35}S-methionine.

Fragments of FLEXGEM may be produced not only by recombinant production, but also by direct peptide synthesis using solid-phase techniques. (See, e.g., Creighton, supra, pp. 55-60.) Protein synthesis

may be performed by manual techniques or by automation. Automated synthesis may be achieved, for example, using the ABI 431A peptide synthesizer (Perkin-Elmer). Various fragments of FLEXGEM may be synthesized separately and then combined to produce the full length molecule.

Screening Assays

5   FLEXGEM encoded by polynucleotides of the present invention may be used to screen for molecules that bind to or are bound by the encoded polypeptides. The binding of the polypeptide and the molecule may activate (agonist), increase, inhibit (antagonist), or decrease activity of the polypeptide or the bound molecule. Examples of such molecules include antibodies, oligonucleotides, proteins (e.g., receptors), or small molecules.

10   Preferably, the molecule is closely related to the natural ligand of the polypeptide, e.g., a ligand or fragment thereof, a natural substrate, or a structural or functional mimetic. (See, Coligan et al., (1991) Current Protocols in Immunology 1(2): Chapter 5.) Similarly, the molecule can be closely related to the natural receptor to which the polypeptide binds, or to at least a fragment of the receptor, e.g., the active site. In either case, the molecule can be rationally designed using known techniques. Preferably, the screening for these molecules involves producing appropriate cells which express the polypeptide, either as a secreted protein or on the cell membrane. Preferred cells include cells from mammals, yeast, Drosophila, or E. coli. Cells expressing the polypeptide or cell membrane fractions which contain the expressed polypeptide are then contacted with a test compound and binding, stimulation, or inhibition of activity of either the polypeptide or the molecule is analyzed.

20   An assay may simply test binding of a candidate compound to the polypeptide, wherein binding is detected by a fluorophore, radioisotope, enzyme conjugate, or other detectable label. Alternatively, the assay may assess binding in the presence of a labeled competitor.

     Additionally, the assay can be carried out using cell-free preparations, polypeptide/molecule affixed to a solid support, chemical libraries, or natural product mixtures. The assay may also simply

25 comprise the steps of mixing a candidate compound with a solution containing a polypeptide, measuring polypeptide/molecule activity or binding, and comparing the polypeptide/molecule activity or binding to a standard.

     Preferably, an ELISA assay using, e.g., a monoclonal or polyclonal antibody, can measure polypeptide level in a sample. The antibody can measure polypeptide level by either binding, directly or

30 indirectly, to the polypeptide or by competing with the polypeptide for a substrate.

     All of the above assays can be used in a diagnostic or prognostic context. The molecules discovered using these assays can be used to treat disease or to bring about a particular result in a patient (e.g., blood vessel growth) by activating or inhibiting the polypeptide/molecule. Moreover, the assays can discover agents which may inhibit or enhance the production of the polypeptide from suitably manipulated

35 cells or tissues.

Transcript Imaging

Another embodiment relates to the use of polynucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM to develop a transcript image of a tissue or cell type. A transcript image is the collective pattern of gene expression by a particular tissue or cell type under given conditions and at a given time. This pattern of gene expression is defined by the number of expressed genes and their abundance. Thus the polynucleotide sequences of the present invention may be used to develop a transcript image of a tissue or cell type by hybridizing, preferably in a microarray format, the polynucleotide sequences of the present invention to the totality of transcripts or reverse transcripts of a tissue or cell type. The resultant transcript image would provide a profile of FLEXGEM gene activity.

Transcript images which profile FLEXGEM gene expression may be generated using transcripts isolated from tissues, cell lines, biopsies, or other biological samples. The transcript image may thus reflect FLEXGEM gene expression in vivo, as in the case of a tissue or biopsy sample, or in vitro, as in the case of a cell line. Transcript images may be used to profile FLEXGEM gene expression in distinct tissue types. This process can be used to determine FLEXGEM gene activity in a particular tissue type relative to this activity in a different tissue type. Transcript images may be used to generate a profile of FLEXGEM gene expression characteristic of diseased tissue. Transcript images of tissues before and after treatment may be used for diagnostic purposes, to monitor the progression of disease, and to monitor the efficacy of drug treatments for diseases which affect the activity of genes encoding FLEXGEM.

Transcript images which profile FLEXGEM gene expression may also be used in conjunction with in vitro model systems and preclinical evaluation of pharmaceuticals. Transcript images of cell lines can be used to assess FLEXGEM activity and/or to identify cell lines that lack or misregulate this activity. Such cell lines may then be treated with pharmaceutical agents, and a transcript image following treatment may indicate the efficacy of these agents in restoring desired levels of this activity. A similar approach may be used to assess the toxicity of pharmaceutical agents as reflected by undesirable changes in FLEXGEM activity. Candidate pharmaceutical agents may be evaluated by comparing their associated transcript images with those of pharmaceutical agents of known effectiveness.

THERAPEUTICS

The expression of FLEXGEM is closely associated with cell proliferation and the immune response. Therefore, FLEXGEM appears to play a role in developmental, cell proliferative, and immunological disorders. In the treatment of disorders associated with increased FLEXGEM expression or activity, it is desirable to decrease the expression or activity of FLEXGEM. In the treatment of disorders associated with decreased FLEXGEM expression or activity, it is desirable to increase the expression or activity of FLEXGEM.

Therefore, in one embodiment, FLEXGEM or a fragment or derivative thereof may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of

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FLEXGEM. Examples of such disorders include, but are not limited to, a developmental disorder such as renal tubular acidosis, anemia, Cushing's syndrome, achondroplastic dwarfism, Duchenne and Becker muscular dystrophy, epilepsy, gonadal dysgenesis, WAGR syndrome (Wilms' tumor, aniridia, genitourinary abnormalities, and mental retardation), Smith-Magenis syndrome, myelodysplastic syndrome, hereditary mucoepithelial dysplasia, hereditary keratodermas, hereditary neuropathies such as Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease and neurofibromatosis, hypothyroidism, hydrocephalus, a seizure disorder such as Syndenham's chorea and cerebral palsy, spina bifida, anencephaly, craniorachischisis, congenital glaucoma, cataract, and sensorineural hearing loss; a cell proliferative disorder such as actinic keratosis, arteriosclerosis, atherosclerosis, bursitis, cirrhosis, hepatitis, mixed connective tissue disease (MCTD), myelofibrosis, paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria, polycythemia vera, psoriasis, primary thrombocythemia, and cancers including adenocarcinoma, leukemia, lymphoma, melanoma, myeloma, sarcoma, teratocarcinoma, and, in particular, a cancer of the adrenal gland, bladder, bone, bone marrow, brain, breast, cervix, gall bladder, ganglia, gastrointestinal tract, heart, kidney, liver, lung, muscle, ovary, pancreas, parathyroid, penis, prostate, salivary glands, skin, spleen, testis, thymus, thyroid, and uterus; and an immunological disorder such as inflammation, actinic keratosis, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), Addison's disease, adult respiratory distress syndrome, allergies, ankylosing spondylitis, amyloidosis, anemia, arteriosclerosis, asthma, atherosclerosis, autoimmune hemolytic anemia, autoimmune thyroiditis, bronchitis, bursitis, cholecystitis, cirrhosis, contact dermatitis, Crohn's disease, atopic dermatitis, dermatomyositis, diabetes mellitus, emphysema, erythroblastosis fetalis, erythema nodosum, atrophic gastritis, glomerulonephritis, Goodpasture's syndrome, gout, Graves' disease, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria, hepatitis, hypereosinophilia, irritable bowel syndrome, episodic lymphopenia with lymphocytotoxins, mixed connective tissue disease (MCTD), multiple sclerosis, myasthenia gravis, myocardial or pericardial inflammation, myelofibrosis, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, pancreatitis, polycythemia vera, polymyositis, psoriasis, Reiter's syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, Sjögren's syndrome, systemic anaphylaxis, systemic lupus erythematosus, systemic sclerosis, primary thrombocythemia, thrombocytopenic purpura, ulcerative colitis, uveitis, Werner syndrome, complications of cancer, hemodialysis, and extracorporeal circulation, trauma, and hematopoietic cancer including lymphoma, leukemia, and myeloma.

In another embodiment, a vector capable of expressing FLEXGEM or a fragment or derivative thereof may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of FLEXGEM including, but not limited to, those described above.

In a further embodiment, a pharmaceutical composition comprising a substantially purified FLEXGEM in conjunction with a suitable pharmaceutical carrier may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of FLEXGEM including, but not limited to, those provided above.

In still another embodiment, an agonist which modulates the activity of FLEXGEM may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of FLEXGEM including, but not limited to, those listed above.

In a further embodiment, an antagonist of FLEXGEM may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with increased expression or activity of FLEXGEM. Examples of such disorders include, but are not limited to, those described above. In one aspect, an antibody which specifically binds FLEXGEM may be used directly as an antagonist or indirectly as a targeting or delivery mechanism for bringing a pharmaceutical agent to cells or tissue which express FLEXGEM.

In an additional embodiment, a vector expressing the complement of the polynucleotide encoding FLEXGEM may be administered to a subject to treat or prevent a disorder associated with increased expression or activity of FLEXGEM including, but not limited to, those described above.

In other embodiments, any of the proteins, antagonists, antibodies, agonists, complementary sequences, or vectors of the invention may be administered in combination with other appropriate therapeutic agents. Selection of the appropriate agents for use in combination therapy may be made by one of ordinary skill in the art, according to conventional pharmaceutical principles. The combination of therapeutic agents may act synergistically to effect the treatment or prevention of the various disorders described above. Using this approach, one may be able to achieve therapeutic efficacy with lower dosages of each agent, thus reducing the potential for adverse side effects.

An antagonist of FLEXGEM may be produced using methods which are generally known in the art. In particular, purified FLEXGEM may be used to produce antibodies or to screen libraries of pharmaceutical agents to identify those which specifically bind FLEXGEM. Antibodies to FLEXGEM may also be generated using methods that are well known in the art. Such antibodies may include, but are not limited to, polyclonal, monoclonal, chimeric, and single chain antibodies, Fab fragments, and fragments produced by a Fab expression library. Neutralizing antibodies (i.e., those which inhibit dimer formation) are especially preferred for therapeutic use.

For the production of antibodies, various hosts including goats, rabbits, rats, mice, humans, and others may be immunized by injection with FLEXGEM or with any fragment or oligopeptide thereof which has immunogenic properties. Depending on the host species, various adjuvants may be used to increase immunological response. Such adjuvants include, but are not limited to, Freund's, mineral gels such as aluminum hydroxide, and surface active substances such as lysolecithin, pluronic polyols, polyanions, peptides, oil emulsions, KLH, and dinitrophenol. Among adjuvants used in humans, BCG (bacilli Calmette-Guerin) and Corynebacterium parvum are especially preferable.

It is preferred that the oligopeptides, peptides, or fragments used to induce antibodies to FLEXGEM have an amino acid sequence consisting of at least about 5 amino acids, and, more preferably, of at least about 10 amino acids. It is also preferable that these oligopeptides, peptides, or fragments are

identical to a portion of the amino acid sequence of the natural protein and contain the entire amino acid sequence of a small, naturally occurring molecule. Short stretches of FLEXGEM amino acids may be fused with those of another protein, such as KLH, and antibodies to the chimeric molecule may be produced.

5   Monoclonal antibodies to FLEXGEM may be prepared using any technique which provides for the production of antibody molecules by continuous cell lines in culture. These include, but are not limited to, the hybridoma technique, the human B-cell hybridoma technique, and the EBV-hybridoma technique. (See, e.g., Kohler, G. et al. (1975) Nature 256:495-497; Kozbor, D. et al. (1985) J. Immunol. Methods 81:31-42; Cote, R.J. et al. (1983) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 80:2026-2030; and Cole, S.P. et al. (1984) Mol.

10   Cell Biol. 62:109-120.)

In addition, techniques developed for the production of "chimeric antibodies," such as the splicing of mouse antibody genes to human antibody genes to obtain a molecule with appropriate antigen specificity and biological activity, can be used. (See, e.g., Morrison, S.L. et al. (1984) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 81:6851-6855; Neuberger, M.S. et al. (1984) Nature 312:604-608; and Takeda, S. et al. (1985) Nature

15   314:452-454.) Alternatively, techniques described for the production of single chain antibodies may be adapted, using methods known in the art, to produce FLEXGEM-specific single chain antibodies. Antibodies with related specificity, but of distinct idiotypic composition, may be generated by chain shuffling from random combinatorial immunoglobulin libraries. (See, e.g., Burton D.R. (1991) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 88:10134-10137.)

20   Antibodies may also be produced by inducing in vivo production in the lymphocyte population or by screening immunoglobulin libraries or panels of highly specific binding reagents as disclosed in the literature. (See, e.g., Orlandi, R. et al. (1989) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 86: 3833-3837; Winter, G. et al. (1991) Nature 349:293-299.)

Antibody fragments which contain specific binding sites for FLEXGEM may also be generated.

25   For example, such fragments include, but are not limited to, F(ab')2 fragments produced by pepsin digestion of the antibody molecule and Fab fragments generated by reducing the disulfide bridges of the F(ab')2 fragments. Alternatively, Fab expression libraries may be constructed to allow rapid and easy identification of monoclonal Fab fragments with the desired specificity. (See, e.g., Huse, W.D. et al. (1989) Science 246:1275-1281.)

30   Various immunoassays may be used for screening to identify antibodies having the desired specificity. Numerous protocols for competitive binding or immunoradiometric assays using either polyclonal or monoclonal antibodies with established specificities are well known in the art. Such immunoassays typically involve the measurement of complex formation between FLEXGEM and its specific antibody. A two-site, monoclonal-based immunoassay utilizing monoclonal antibodies reactive to

35   two non-interfering FLEXGEM epitopes is preferred, but a competitive binding assay may also be

employed (Pound, supra).

Various methods such as Scatchard analysis in conjunction with radioimmunoassay techniques may be used to assess the affinity of antibodies for FLEXGEM. Affinity is expressed as an association constant, K_a, which is defined as the molar concentration of FLEXGEM-antibody complex divided by the

5   molar concentrations of free antigen and free antibody under equilibrium conditions. The K_a determined for a preparation of polyclonal antibodies, which are heterogeneous in their affinities for multiple FLEXGEM epitopes, represents the average affinity, or avidity, of the antibodies for FLEXGEM. The K_a determined for a preparation of monoclonal antibodies, which are monospecific for a particular FLEXGEM epitope, represents a true measure of affinity. High-affinity antibody preparations with K_a

10   ranging from about 10^9 to 10^{12} L/mole are preferred for use in immunoassays in which the FLEXGEM-antibody complex must withstand rigorous manipulations. Low-affinity antibody preparations with K_a ranging from about 10^6 to 10^7 L/mole are preferred for use in immunopurification and similar procedures which ultimately require dissociation of FLEXGEM, preferably in active form, from the antibody (Catty, D. (1988) Antibodies, Volume I: A Practical Approach, IRL Press, Washington, DC; Liddell, J. E. and

15   Cryer, A. (1991) A Practical Guide to Monoclonal Antibodies, John Wiley & Sons, New York NY).

The titer and avidity of polyclonal antibody preparations may be further evaluated to determine the quality and suitability of such preparations for certain downstream applications. For example, a polyclonal antibody preparation containing at least 1-2 mg specific antibody/ml, preferably 5-10 mg specific antibody/ml, is preferred for use in procedures requiring precipitation of FLEXGEM-antibody complexes.

20   Procedures for evaluating antibody specificity, titer, and avidity, and guidelines for antibody quality and usage in various applications, are generally available. (See, e.g., Catty, supra, and Coligan et al. supra.)

In another embodiment of the invention, the polynucleotides encoding FLEXGEM, or any fragment or complement thereof, may be used for therapeutic purposes. In one aspect, the complement of the polynucleotide encoding FLEXGEM may be used in situations in which it would be desirable to

25   block the transcription of the mRNA. In particular, cells may be transformed with sequences complementary to polynucleotides encoding FLEXGEM. Thus, complementary molecules or fragments may be used to modulate FLEXGEM activity, or to achieve regulation of gene function. Such technology is now well known in the art, and sense or antisense oligonucleotides or larger fragments can be designed from various locations along the coding or control regions of sequences encoding FLEXGEM.

30   Expression vectors derived from retroviruses, adenoviruses, or herpes or vaccinia viruses, or from various bacterial plasmids, may be used for delivery of nucleotide sequences to the targeted organ, tissue, or cell population. Methods which are well known to those skilled in the art can be used to construct vectors to express nucleic acid sequences complementary to the polynucleotides encoding FLEXGEM. (See, e.g., Sambrook, supra; Ausubel, 1995, supra.)

35   Genes encoding FLEXGEM can be turned off by transforming a cell or tissue with expression

vectors which express high levels of a polynucleotide, or fragment thereof, encoding FLEXGEM. Such constructs may be used to introduce untranslatable sense or antisense sequences into a cell. Even in the absence of integration into the DNA, such vectors may continue to transcribe RNA molecules until they are disabled by endogenous nucleases. Transient expression may last for a month or more with a

5   non-replicating vector, and may last even longer if appropriate replication elements are part of the vector system.

As mentioned above, modifications of gene expression can be obtained by designing complementary sequences or antisense molecules (DNA, RNA, or PNA) to the control, 5', or regulatory regions of the gene encoding FLEXGEM. Oligonucleotides derived from the transcription initiation site,

10   e.g., between about positions -10 and +10 from the start site, are preferred. Similarly, inhibition can be achieved using triple helix base-pairing methodology. Triple helix pairing is useful because it causes inhibition of the ability of the double helix to open sufficiently for the binding of polymerases, transcription factors, or regulatory molecules. Recent therapeutic advances using triplex DNA have been described in the literature. (See, e.g., Gee, J.E. et al. (1994) in Huber, B.E. and B.I. Carr, Molecular and Immunologic

15   Approaches, Futura Publishing, Mt. Kisco NY, pp. 163-177.) A complementary sequence or antisense molecule may also be designed to block translation of mRNA by preventing the transcript from binding to ribosomes.

Ribozymes, enzymatic RNA molecules, may also be used to catalyze the specific cleavage of RNA. The mechanism of ribozyme action involves sequence-specific hybridization of the ribozyme

20   molecule to complementary target RNA, followed by endonucleolytic cleavage. For example, engineered hammerhead motif ribozyme molecules may specifically and efficiently catalyze endonucleolytic cleavage of sequences encoding FLEXGEM.

Specific ribozyme cleavage sites within any potential RNA target are initially identified by scanning the target molecule for ribozyme cleavage sites, including the following sequences: GUA, GUU,

25   and GUC. Once identified, short RNA sequences of between 15 and 20 ribonucleotides, corresponding to the region of the target gene containing the cleavage site, may be evaluated for secondary structural features which may render the oligonucleotide inoperable. The suitability of candidate targets may also be evaluated by testing accessibility to hybridization with complementary oligonucleotides using ribonuclease protection assays.

30   Complementary ribonucleic acid molecules and ribozymes of the invention may be prepared by any method known in the art for the synthesis of nucleic acid molecules. These include techniques for chemically synthesizing oligonucleotides such as solid phase phosphoramidite chemical synthesis. Alternatively, RNA molecules may be generated by in vitro and in vivo transcription of DNA sequences encoding FLEXGEM. Such DNA sequences may be incorporated into a wide variety of vectors with

35   suitable RNA polymerase promoters such as T7 or SP6. Alternatively, these cDNA constructs that

synthesize complementary RNA, constitutively or inducibly, can be introduced into cell lines, cells, or tissues.

RNA molecules may be modified to increase intracellular stability and half-life. Possible modifications include, but are not limited to, the addition of flanking sequences at the 5' and/or 3' ends of the molecule, or the use of phosphorothioate or 2' O-methyl rather than phosphodiesterase linkages within the backbone of the molecule. This concept is inherent in the production of PNAs and can be extended in all of these molecules by the inclusion of nontraditional bases such as inosine, queosine, and wybutosine, as well as acetyl-, methyl-, thio-, and similarly modified forms of adenine, cytidine, guanine, thymine, and uridine which are not as easily recognized by endogenous endonucleases.

Many methods for introducing vectors into cells or tissues are available and equally suitable for use in vivo, in vitro, and ex vivo. For ex vivo therapy, vectors may be introduced into stem cells taken from the patient and clonally propagated for autologous transplant back into that same patient. Delivery by transfection, by liposome injections, or by polycationic amino polymers may be achieved using methods which are well known in the art. (See, e.g., Goldman, C.K. et al. (1997) Nature Biotechnology 15:462-466.)

Any of the therapeutic methods described above may be applied to any subject in need of such therapy, including, for example, mammals such as dogs, cats, cows, horses, rabbits, monkeys, and most preferably, humans.

An additional embodiment of the invention relates to the administration of a pharmaceutical or sterile composition, in conjunction with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, for any of the therapeutic effects discussed above. Such pharmaceutical compositions may consist of FLEXGEM, antibodies to FLEXGEM, and mimetics, agonists, antagonists, or inhibitors of FLEXGEM. The compositions may be administered alone or in combination with at least one other agent, such as a stabilizing compound, which may be administered in any sterile, biocompatible pharmaceutical carrier including, but not limited to, saline, buffered saline, dextrose, and water. The compositions may be administered to a patient alone, or in combination with other agents, drugs, or hormones.

The pharmaceutical compositions utilized in this invention may be administered by any number of routes including, but not limited to, oral, intravenous, intramuscular, intra-arterial, intramedullary, intrathecal, intraventricular, transdermal, subcutaneous, intraperitoneal, intranasal, enteral, topical, sublingual, or rectal means.

In addition to the active ingredients, these pharmaceutical compositions may contain suitable pharmaceutically-acceptable carriers comprising excipients and auxiliaries which facilitate processing of the active compounds into preparations which can be used pharmaceutically. Further details on techniques for formulation and administration may be found in the latest edition of Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences (Maack Publishing, Easton PA).

Pharmaceutical compositions for oral administration can be formulated using pharmaceutically acceptable carriers well known in the art in dosages suitable for oral administration. Such carriers enable the pharmaceutical compositions to be formulated as tablets, pills, dragees, capsules, liquids, gels, syrups, slurries, suspensions, and the like, for ingestion by the patient.

5   Pharmaceutical preparations for oral use can be obtained through combining active compounds with solid excipient and processing the resultant mixture of granules (optionally, after grinding) to obtain tablets or dragee cores. Suitable auxiliaries can be added, if desired. Suitable excipients include carbohydrate or protein fillers, such as sugars, including lactose, sucrose, mannitol, and sorbitol; starch from corn, wheat, rice, potato, or other plants; cellulose, such as methyl cellulose,

10   hydroxypropylmethyl-cellulose, or sodium carboxymethylcellulose; gums, including arabic and tragacanth; and proteins, such as gelatin and collagen. If desired, disintegrating or solubilizing agents may be added, such as the cross-linked polyvinyl pyrrolidone, agar, and alginic acid or a salt thereof, such as sodium alginate.

      Dragee cores may be used in conjunction with suitable coatings, such as concentrated sugar

15   solutions, which may also contain gum arabic, talc, polyvinylpyrrolidone, carbopol gel, polyethylene glycol, and/or titanium dioxide, lacquer solutions, and suitable organic solvents or solvent mixtures. Dyestuffs or pigments may be added to the tablets or dragee coatings for product identification or to characterize the quantity of active compound, i.e., dosage.

      Pharmaceutical preparations which can be used orally include push-fit capsules made of gelatin,

20   as well as soft, sealed capsules made of gelatin and a coating, such as glycerol or sorbitol. Push-fit capsules can contain active ingredients mixed with fillers or binders, such as lactose or starches, lubricants, such as talc or magnesium stearate, and, optionally, stabilizers. In soft capsules, the active compounds may be dissolved or suspended in suitable liquids, such as fatty oils, liquid, or liquid polyethylene glycol with or without stabilizers.

25   Pharmaceutical formulations suitable for parenteral administration may be formulated in aqueous solutions, preferably in physiologically compatible buffers such as Hanks' solution, Ringer's solution, or physiologically buffered saline. Aqueous injection suspensions may contain substances which increase the viscosity of the suspension, such as sodium carboxymethyl cellulose, sorbitol, or dextran. Additionally, suspensions of the active compounds may be prepared as appropriate oily injection suspensions. Suitable

30   lipophilic solvents or vehicles include fatty oils, such as sesame oil, or synthetic fatty acid esters, such as ethyl oleate, triglycerides, or liposomes. Non-lipid polycationic amino polymers may also be used for delivery. Optionally, the suspension may also contain suitable stabilizers or agents to increase the solubility of the compounds and allow for the preparation of highly concentrated solutions.

      For topical or nasal administration, penetrants appropriate to the particular barrier to be permeated

35   are used in the formulation. Such penetrants are generally known in the art.

The pharmaceutical compositions of the present invention may be manufactured in a manner that is known in the art, e.g., by means of conventional mixing, dissolving, granulating, dragee-making, levigating, emulsifying, encapsulating, entrapping, or lyophilizing processes.

The pharmaceutical composition may be provided as a salt and can be formed with many acids, including but not limited to, hydrochloric, sulfuric, acetic, lactic, tartaric, malic, and succinic acids. Salts tend to be more soluble in aqueous or other protonic solvents than are the corresponding free base forms. In other cases, the preferred preparation may be a lyophilized powder which may contain any or all of the following: 1 mM to 50 mM histidine, 0.1% to 2% sucrose, and 2% to 7% mannitol, at a pH range of 4.5 to 5.5, that is combined with buffer prior to use.

After pharmaceutical compositions have been prepared, they can be placed in an appropriate container and labeled for treatment of an indicated condition. For administration of FLEXGEM, such labeling would include amount, frequency, and method of administration.

Pharmaceutical compositions suitable for use in the invention include compositions wherein the active ingredients are contained in an effective amount to achieve the intended purpose. The determination of an effective dose is well within the capability of those skilled in the art.

For any compound, the therapeutically effective dose can be estimated initially either in cell culture assays, e.g., of neoplastic cells or in animal models such as mice, rats, rabbits, dogs, or pigs. An animal model may also be used to determine the appropriate concentration range and route of administration. Such information can then be used to determine useful doses and routes for administration in humans.

A therapeutically effective dose refers to that amount of active ingredient, for example FLEXGEM or fragments thereof, antibodies of FLEXGEM, and agonists, antagonists or inhibitors of FLEXGEM, which ameliorates the symptoms or condition. Therapeutic efficacy and toxicity may be determined by standard pharmaceutical procedures in cell cultures or with experimental animals, such as by calculating the ED_{50} (the dose therapeutically effective in 50% of the population) or LD_{50} (the dose lethal to 50% of the population) statistics. The dose ratio of toxic to therapeutic effects is the therapeutic index, which can be expressed as the LD_{50}/ED_{50} ratio. Pharmaceutical compositions which exhibit large therapeutic indices are preferred. The data obtained from cell culture assays and animal studies are used to formulate a range of dosage for human use. The dosage contained in such compositions is preferably within a range of circulating concentrations that includes the ED_{50} with little or no toxicity. The dosage varies within this range depending upon the dosage form employed, the sensitivity of the patient, and the route of administration.

The exact dosage will be determined by the practitioner, in light of factors related to the subject requiring treatment. Dosage and administration are adjusted to provide sufficient levels of the active moiety or to maintain the desired effect. Factors which may be taken into account include the severity of

the disease state, the general health of the subject, the age, weight, and gender of the subject, time and frequency of administration, drug combination(s), reaction sensitivities, and response to therapy. Long-acting pharmaceutical compositions may be administered every 3 to 4 days, every week, or biweekly depending on the half-life and clearance rate of the particular formulation.

5   Normal dosage amounts may vary from about 0.1 μg to 100,000 μg, up to a total dose of about 1 gram, depending upon the route of administration. Guidance as to particular dosages and methods of delivery is provided in the literature and generally available to practitioners in the art. Those skilled in the art will employ different formulations for nucleotides than for proteins or their inhibitors. Similarly, delivery of polynucleotides or polypeptides will be specific to particular cells, conditions, locations, etc.

10 **DIAGNOSTICS**

        In another embodiment, antibodies which specifically bind FLEXGEM may be used for the diagnosis of disorders characterized by expression of FLEXGEM, or in assays to monitor patients being treated with FLEXGEM or agonists, antagonists, or inhibitors of FLEXGEM. Antibodies useful for diagnostic purposes may be prepared in the same manner as described above for therapeutics. Diagnostic assays for FLEXGEM include methods which utilize the antibody and a label to detect FLEXGEM in human body fluids or in extracts of cells or tissues. The antibodies may be used with or without modification, and may be labeled by covalent or non-covalent attachment of a reporter molecule. A wide variety of reporter molecules, several of which are described above, are known in the art and may be used.

        A variety of protocols for measuring FLEXGEM, including ELISAs, RIAs, and FACS, are known in the art and provide a basis for diagnosing altered or abnormal levels of FLEXGEM expression. Normal or standard values for FLEXGEM expression are established by combining body fluids or cell extracts taken from normal mammalian subjects, preferably human, with antibody to FLEXGEM under conditions suitable for complex formation. The amount of standard complex formation may be quantitated by various methods, preferably by photometric means. Quantities of FLEXGEM expressed in subject, control, and disease samples from biopsied tissues are compared with the standard values. Deviation between standard and subject values establishes the parameters for diagnosing disease.

        In another embodiment of the invention, the polynucleotides encoding FLEXGEM may be used for diagnostic purposes. The polynucleotides which may be used include oligonucleotide sequences, complementary RNA and DNA molecules, and PNAs. The polynucleotides may be used to detect and quantitate gene expression in biopsied tissues in which expression of FLEXGEM may be correlated with disease. The diagnostic assay may be used to determine absence, presence, and excess expression of FLEXGEM, and to monitor regulation of FLEXGEM levels during therapeutic intervention.

        In one aspect, hybridization with PCR probes which are capable of detecting polynucleotide sequences, including genomic sequences, encoding FLEXGEM or closely related molecules may be used

to identify nucleic acid sequences which encode FLEXGEM. The specificity of the probe, whether it is made from a highly specific region, e.g., the 5' regulatory region, or from a less specific region, e.g., a conserved motif, and the stringency of the hybridization or amplification (maximal, high, intermediate, or low), will determine whether the probe identifies only naturally occurring sequences encoding FLEXGEM, allelic variants, or related sequences.

Probes may also be used for the detection of related sequences, and should preferably have at least 50% sequence identity to any of the FLEXGEM encoding sequences. The hybridization probes of the subject invention may be DNA or RNA and may be derived from the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21-40 or from genomic sequences including promoters, enhancers, and introns of the FLEXGEM gene.

Means for producing specific hybridization probes for DNAs encoding FLEXGEM include the cloning of polynucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM or FLEXGEM derivatives into vectors for the production of mRNA probes. Such vectors are known in the art, are commercially available, and may be used to synthesize RNA probes <u>in vitro</u> by means of the addition of the appropriate RNA polymerases and the appropriate labeled nucleotides. Hybridization probes may be labeled by a variety of reporter groups, for example, by radionuclides such as ^{32}P or ^{35}S, or by enzymatic labels, such as alkaline phosphatase coupled to the probe via avidin/biotin coupling systems, and the like.

Polynucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM may be used for the diagnosis of disorders associated with expression of FLEXGEM. Examples of such disorders include, but are not limited to, a developmental disorder such as renal tubular acidosis, anemia, Cushing's syndrome, achondroplastic dwarfism, Duchenne and Becker muscular dystrophy, epilepsy, gonadal dysgenesis, WAGR syndrome (Wilms' tumor, aniridia, genitourinary abnormalities, and mental retardation), Smith-Magenis syndrome, myelodysplastic syndrome, hereditary mucoepithelial dysplasia, hereditary keratodermas, hereditary neuropathies such as Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease and neurofibromatosis, hypothyroidism, hydrocephalus, a seizure disorder such as Syndenham's chorea and cerebral palsy, spina bifida, anencephaly, craniorachischisis, congenital glaucoma, cataract, and sensorineural hearing loss; a cell proliferative disorder such as actinic keratosis, arteriosclerosis, atherosclerosis, bursitis, cirrhosis, hepatitis, mixed connective tissue disease (MCTD), myelofibrosis, paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria, polycythemia vera, psoriasis, primary thrombocythemia, and cancers including adenocarcinoma, leukemia, lymphoma, melanoma, myeloma, sarcoma, teratocarcinoma, and, in particular, a cancer of the adrenal gland, bladder, bone, bone marrow, brain, breast, cervix, gall bladder, ganglia, gastrointestinal tract, heart, kidney, liver, lung, muscle, ovary, pancreas, parathyroid, penis, prostate, salivary glands, skin, spleen, testis, thymus, thyroid, and uterus; and an immunological disorder such as inflammation, actinic keratosis, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), Addison's disease, adult respiratory distress syndrome, allergies, ankylosing spondylitis, amyloidosis, anemia, arteriosclerosis, asthma, atherosclerosis, autoimmune hemolytic anemia, autoimmune thyroiditis, bronchitis, bursitis, cholecystitis, cirrhosis, contact dermatitis,

Crohn's disease, atopic dermatitis, dermatomyositis, diabetes mellitus, emphysema, erythroblastosis fetalis, erythema nodosum, atrophic gastritis, glomerulonephritis, Goodpasture's syndrome, gout, Graves' disease, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria, hepatitis, hypereosinophilia, irritable bowel syndrome, episodic lymphopenia with lymphocytotoxins, mixed connective tissue disease (MCTD),

5   multiple sclerosis, myasthenia gravis, myocardial or pericardial inflammation, myelofibrosis, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, pancreatitis, polycythemia vera, polymyositis, psoriasis, Reiter's syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, Sjögren's syndrome, systemic anaphylaxis, systemic lupus erythematosus, systemic sclerosis, primary thrombocythemia, thrombocytopenic purpura, ulcerative colitis, uveitis, Werner syndrome, complications of cancer, hemodialysis, and extracorporeal circulation, trauma, and

10   hematopoietic cancer including lymphoma, leukemia, and myeloma. The polynucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM may be used in Southern or northern analysis, dot blot, or other membrane-based technologies; in PCR technologies; in dipstick, pin, and multiformat ELISA-like assays; and in microarrays utilizing fluids or tissues from patients to detect altered FLEXGEM expression. Such qualitative or quantitative methods are well known in the art.

15   In a particular aspect, the nucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM may be useful in assays that detect the presence of associated disorders, particularly those mentioned above. The nucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM may be labeled by standard methods and added to a fluid or tissue sample from a patient under conditions suitable for the formation of hybridization complexes. After a suitable incubation period, the sample is washed and the signal is quantitated and compared with a

20   standard value. If the amount of signal in the patient sample is significantly altered in comparison to a control sample then the presence of altered levels of nucleotide sequences encoding FLEXGEM in the sample indicates the presence of the associated disorder. Such assays may also be used to evaluate the efficacy of a particular therapeutic treatment regimen in animal studies, in clinical trials, or to monitor the treatment of an individual patient.

25   In order to provide a basis for the diagnosis of a disorder associated with expression of FLEXGEM, a normal or standard profile for expression is established. This may be accomplished by combining body fluids or cell extracts taken from normal subjects, either animal or human, with a sequence, or a fragment thereof, encoding FLEXGEM, under conditions suitable for hybridization or amplification. Standard hybridization may be quantified by comparing the values obtained from normal

30   subjects with values from an experiment in which a known amount of a substantially purified polynucleotide is used. Standard values obtained in this manner may be compared with values obtained from samples from patients who are symptomatic for a disorder. Deviation from standard values is used to establish the presence of a disorder.

        Once the presence of a disorder is established and a treatment protocol is initiated, hybridization

35   assays may be repeated on a regular basis to determine if the level of expression in the patient begins to

approximate that which is observed in the normal subject. The results obtained from successive assays may be used to show the efficacy of treatment over a period ranging from several days to months.

With respect to cancer, the presence of an abnormal amount of transcript (either under- or overexpressed) in biopsied tissue from an individual may indicate a predisposition for the development of the disease, or may provide a means for detecting the disease prior to the appearance of actual clinical symptoms. A more definitive diagnosis of this type may allow health professionals to employ preventative measures or aggressive treatment earlier thereby preventing the development or further progression of the cancer.

Additional diagnostic uses for oligonucleotides designed from the sequences encoding FLEXGEM may involve the use of PCR. These oligomers may be chemically synthesized, generated enzymatically, or produced in vitro. Oligomers will preferably contain a fragment of a polynucleotide encoding FLEXGEM, or a fragment of a polynucleotide complementary to the polynucleotide encoding FLEXGEM, and will be employed under optimized conditions for identification of a specific gene or condition. Oligomers may also be employed under less stringent conditions for detection or quantitation of closely related DNA or RNA sequences.

Methods which may also be used to quantify the expression of FLEXGEM include radiolabeling or biotinylating nucleotides, coamplification of a control nucleic acid, and interpolating results from standard curves. (See, e.g., Melby, P.C. et al. (1993) J. Immunol. Methods 159:235-244; Duplaa, C. et al. (1993) Anal. Biochem. 212:229-236.) The speed of quantification of multiple samples may be accelerated by running the assay in an ELISA format where the oligomer of interest is presented in various dilutions and a spectrophotometric or colorimetric response gives rapid quantification.

The polynucleotides are also useful for identifying individuals on the basis of minute biological samples, for example, by matching the restriction fragment length polymurphism (RFLP) pattern of a sample's DNA to that of an individual's DNA. The polynucleotides of the present invention can also be used to determine the actual base-by-base DNA sequence of selected portions of an individual's genome. These sequences can be used to prepare PCR primers for amplifying and isolating such selected DNA, which can then be sequenced. Using this technique, an individual can be identified through a unique set of DNA sequences. Once a unique ID database is established for an individual, positive identification of that individual can be made from extremely small tissue samples.

DNA-based identification techniques are critical in forensic technology. DNA sequences taken from very small biological samples such as tissues, e.g., hair or skin, or body fluids, e.g., blood, saliva, semen, etc., can be amplified using, e.g., PCR, to identify individuals. (See, e.g., Erlich, H., (1992) PCR Technology, Freeman and Co., New York, NY). Similarly, polynucleotides of the present invention can be used as polymorphic markers.

There is also a need for reagents capable of identifying the source of a particular tissue.

Appropriate reagents can comprise, for example, DNA probes or primers prepared from the sequences of the present invention that are specific for particular tissues. Panels of such reagents can identify tissue by species and/or by organ type. In a similar fashion, these reagents can be used to screen tissue cultures for contamination.

The polynucleotides of the present invention can also be used as molecular weight markers on nucleic acid gels or Southern blots, as diagnostic probes for the presence of a specific mRNA in a particular cell type, in the creation of subtracted cDNA libraries which aid in the discovery of novel polynucleotides, in selection and synthesis of oligomers for attachment to an array or other support, and as an antigen to elicit an immune response.

In further embodiments, oligonucleotides or longer fragments derived from any of the polynucleotide sequences described herein may be used as targets in a microarray. The microarray can be used to monitor the expression level of large numbers of genes simultaneously and to identify genetic variants, mutations, and polymorphisms. This information may be used to determine gene function, to understand the genetic basis of a disorder, to diagnose a disorder, and to develop and monitor the activities of therapeutic agents.

Microarrays may be prepared, used, and analyzed using methods known in the art. (See, e.g., Brennan, T.M. et al. (1995) U.S. Patent No. 5,474,796; Schena, M. et al. (1996) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 93:10614-10619; Baldeschweiler et al. (1995) PCT application WO95/251116; Shalon, D. et al. (1995) PCT application WO95/35505; Heller, R.A. et al. (1997) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 94:2150-2155; and Heller, M.J. et al. (1997) U.S. Patent No. 5,605,662.)

For example, a chemical coupling procedure and an ink jet device can be used to synthesize array elements on the surface of a substrate. (See, e.g., Baldeschweiler, supra.) An array analogous to a dot or slot blot may also be used to arrange and link elements to the surface of a substrate using thermal, UV, chemical, or mechanical bonding procedures. A typical array may be produced by hand or using available methods and machines and contain any appropriate number of elements. After hybridization, nonhybridized probes are removed and a scanner used to determine the levels and patterns of fluorescence. The degree of complementarity and the relative abundance of each probe which hybridizes to an element on the microarray may be assessed through analysis of the scanned images.

Full-length cDNAs, Expressed Sequence Tags (ESTs), or fragments thereof may comprise the elements of the microarray. Fragments suitable for hybridization can be selected using software well known in the art such as LASERGENE software (DNASTAR). Full-length cDNAs, ESTs, or fragments thereof corresponding to one of the nucleotide sequences of the present invention, or selected at random from a cDNA library relevant to the present invention, are arranged on an appropriate substrate, e.g., a glass slide. The cDNA is fixed to the slide using, e.g., UV cross-linking followed by thermal and chemical treatments and subsequent drying. (See, e.g., Schena, M. et al. (1995) Science 270:467-470; Shalon, D. et

al. (1996) Genome Res. 6:639-645.) Fluorescent probes are prepared and used for hybridization to the elements on the substrate. The substrate is analyzed by procedures described above.

Genetic mapping

Gene identification and mapping are important in the investigation and treatment of almost all
5   conditions, diseases, and disorders. Cancer, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, diabetes, and mental illnesses are of particular interest. Each of these conditions is more complex than the single gene defects of sickle cell anemia or cystic fibrosis, with select groups of genes being predictive of predisposition for a particular condition, disease, or disorder. For example, cardiovascular disease may result from malfunctioning receptor molecules that fail to clear cholesterol from the bloodstream, and
10   diabetes may result when a particular individual's immune system is activated by an infection and attacks the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. In some studies, Alzheimer's disease has been linked to a gene on chromosome 21; other studies predict a different gene and location. Mapping of disease genes is a complex and reiterative process and generally proceeds from genetic linkage analysis to physical mapping.

15   As a condition is noted among members of a family, a genetic linkage map traces parts of chromosomes that are inherited in the same pattern as the condition. Statistics link the inheritance of particular conditions to particular regions of chromosomes, as defined by RFLP or other markers. (See, for example, Lander, E. S. and Botstein, D. (1986) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 83:7353-7357.) Occasionally, genetic markers and their locations are known from previous studies. More often, however,
20   the markers are simply stretches of DNA that differ among individuals. Examples of genetic linkage maps can be found in various scientific journals or at the Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man (OMIM) World Wide Web site.

In another embodiment of the invention, FLEXGEM polynucleotide sequences may be used to generate hybridization probes useful in chromosomal mapping of naturally occurring genomic sequences.
25   Either coding or noncoding polynucleotide sequences may be used, and in some instances, noncoding sequences may be preferable over coding sequences. For example, conservation of a coding sequence among members of a multi-gene family may potentially cause undesired cross hybridization during chromosomal mapping. The sequences may be mapped to a particular chromosome, to a specific region of a chromosome, or to artificial chromosome constructions, e.g., human artificial chromosomes (HACs),
30   yeast artificial chromosomes (YACs), bacterial artificial chromosomes (BACs), bacterial P1 constructions, or single chromosome cDNA libraries. (See, e.g., Harrington, J.J. et al. (1997) Nat. Genet. 15:345-355; Price, C.M. (1993) Blood Rev. 7:127-134; and Trask, B.J. (1991) Trends Genet. 7:149-154.)

Fluorescent in situ hybridization (FISH) may be correlated with other physical chromosome mapping techniques and genetic map data. (See, e.g., Meyers, supra, pp. 965-968.) Correlation between
35   the location of a FLEXGEM polynucleotide sequence on a physical chromosomal map and a specific

disorder, or a predisposition to a specific disorder, may help define the region of DNA associated with that disorder. The FLEXGEM polynucleotide sequences may also be used to detect polymorphisms that are genetically linked to the inheritance of a particular condition, disease, or disorder, or that modify susceptibility to a particular condition, disease, or disorder.

In situ hybridization of chromosomal preparations and genetic mapping techniques, such as linkage analysis using established chromosomal markers, may be used for extending existing genetic maps. Often the placement of a gene on the chromosome of another mammalian species, such as mouse, may reveal associated markers even if the number or arm of the corresponding human chromosome is not known. These new marker sequences can be mapped to human chromosomes and may provide valuable information to investigators searching for disease genes using positional cloning or other gene discovery techniques. Once a disease or syndrome has been crudely correlated by genetic linkage with a particular genomic region, e.g., ataxia-telangiectasia to 11q22-23, any sequences mapping to that area may represent associated or regulatory genes for further investigation. (See, e.g., Gatti, R.A. et al. (1988) Nature 336:577-580.) The nucleotide sequences of the subject invention may also be used to detect differences in chromosomal architecture due to translocation, inversion, etc., among normal, carrier, or affected individuals.

Once a disease-associated gene is mapped to a chromosomal region, the gene must be cloned in order to identify mutations or other alterations (e.g., translocations or inversions) that may be correlated with disease. This process requires a physical map of the chromosomal region containing the disease-gene of interest along with associated markers. A physical map is necessary for determining the nucleotide sequence and order of marker genes on a particular chromosomal region. Physical mapping techniques are well known in the art and require the generation of overlapping sets of cloned DNA fragments from a particular organelle, chromosome, or genome. These clones are analyzed to reconstruct and catalog their order. Once the position of a marker is determined, the DNA from that region is obtained by consulting the catalog and selecting clones from that region. The gene of interest is located through positional cloning techniques using hybridization or similar methods.

SNP Discovery and Detection

A further embodiment encompasses the use of polynucleotides encoding FLEXGEM toward the discovery of SNPs, preferably by microarray-based, high-throughput methods. Such methods would identify SNPs as variants, or alleles, of the polynucleotides of the invention among individuals or populations. Similar methods may then be used for genotyping and for the identification of those SNPs that are correlated with phenotypic characteristics such as disease risk or responsiveness to therapy. For example, the FLEXGEM alleles present in a disease-affected individual or population would be compared with those alleles observed in a control individual or population. The statistically significant occurrence of certain alleles in the diseased sample compared to the control sample indicates a correlation of these

alleles with disease susceptibility or disease progression. Furthermore, the identification of SNPs present in the polynucleotides of the invention and the assignment of these SNPs to a particular chromosome map position would provide useful markers for human genetic studies and may provide a basis for haplotype analysis in human populations.

5   Screening

In another embodiment of the invention, FLEXGEM, its catalytic or immunogenic fragments, or oligopeptides thereof can be used for screening libraries of compounds in any of a variety of drug screening techniques. The fragment employed in such screening may be free in solution, affixed to a solid support, borne on a cell surface, or located intracellularly. The formation of binding complexes between 10   FLEXGEM and the agent being tested may be measured.

Another technique for drug screening provides for high throughput screening of compounds having suitable binding affinity to the protein of interest. (See, e.g., Geysen, et al. (1984) PCT application WO84/03564.) In this method, large numbers of different small test compounds are synthesized on a solid substrate. The test compounds are reacted with FLEXGEM, or fragments thereof, and washed. Bound 15   FLEXGEM is then detected by methods well known in the art. Purified FLEXGEM can also be coated directly onto plates for use in the aforementioned drug screening techniques. Alternatively, non-neutralizing antibodies can be used to capture the peptide and immobilize it on a solid support.

In another embodiment, one may use competitive drug screening assays in which neutralizing antibodies capable of binding FLEXGEM specifically compete with a test compound for binding 20   FLEXGEM. In this manner, antibodies can be used to detect the presence of any peptide which shares one or more antigenic determinants with FLEXGEM.

In additional embodiments, the nucleotide sequences which encode FLEXGEM may be used in any molecular biology techniques that have yet to be developed, provided the new techniques rely on properties of nucleotide sequences that are currently known, including, but not limited to, such properties 25   as the triplet genetic code and specific base pair interactions.

The examples below are provided to illustrate the subject invention and are not included for the purpose of limiting the invention.

EXAMPLES

I.   Construction of cDNA Libraries

30   RNA was purchased from Clontech or isolated from tissues described in Table 4. Some tissues were homogenized and lysed in guanidinium isothiocyanate, while others were homogenized and lysed in phenol or in a suitable mixture of denaturants, such as TRIZOL (Life Technologies), a monophasic solution of phenol and guanidine isothiocyanate. The resulting lysates were centrifuged over CsCl cushions or extracted with chloroform. RNA was precipitated from the lysates with either isopropanol or 35   sodium acetate and ethanol, or by other routine methods.

Phenol extraction and precipitation of RNA were repeated as necessary to increase RNA purity. In some cases, RNA was treated with DNase. For most libraries, poly(A+) RNA was isolated using oligo d(T)-coupled paramagnetic particles (Promega), OLIGOTEX latex particles (QIAGEN, Chatsworth CA), or an OLIGOTEX mRNA purification kit (QIAGEN). Alternatively, RNA was isolated directly from tissue lysates using other RNA isolation kits, e.g., the POLY(A)PURE mRNA purification kit (Ambion, Austin TX).

In some cases, Stratagene was provided with RNA and constructed the corresponding cDNA libraries. Otherwise, cDNA was synthesized and cDNA libraries were constructed with the UNIZAP vector system (Stratagene) or SUPERSCRIPT plasmid system (Life Technologies), using the recommended procedures or similar methods known in the art. (See, e.g., Ausubel, 1997, supra, units 5.1-6.6.) Reverse transcription was initiated using oligo d(T) or random primers. Synthetic oligonucleotide adapters were ligated to double stranded cDNA, and the cDNA was digested with the appropriate restriction enzyme or enzymes. For most libraries, the cDNA was size-selected (300-1000 bp) using SEPHACRYL S1000, SEPHAROSE CL2B, or SEPHAROSE CL4B column chromatography (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech) or preparative agarose gel electrophoresis. cDNAs were ligated into compatible restriction enzyme sites of the polylinker of a suitable plasmid, e.g., PBLUESCRIPT plasmid (Stratagene), pSPORT1 plasmid (Life Technologies), or pINCY (Incyte Pharmaceuticals, Palo Alto CA). Recombinant plasmids were transformed into competent E. coli cells including XL1-Blue, XL1-BlueMRF, or SOLR from Stratagene or DH5α, DH10B, or ElectroMAX DH10B from Life Technologies.

II.   Isolation of cDNA Clones

Plasmids were recovered from host cells by in vivo excision using the UNIZAP vector system (Stratagene) or by cell lysis. Plasmids were purified using at least one of the following: a Magic or WIZARD Minipreps DNA purification system (Promega); an AGTC Miniprep purification kit (Edge Biosystems, Gaithersburg MD); and QIAWELL 8 Plasmid, QIAWELL 8 Plus Plasmid, QIAWELL 8 Ultra Plasmid purification systems or the R.E.A.L. PREP 96 plasmid purification kit from QIAGEN. Following precipitation, plasmids were resuspended in 0.1 ml of distilled water and stored, with or without lyophilization, at 4°C.

Alternatively, plasmid DNA was amplified from host cell lysates using direct link PCR in a high-throughput format (Rao, V.B. (1994) Anal. Biochem. 216:1-14). Host cell lysis and thermal cycling steps were carried out in a single reaction mixture. Samples were processed and stored in 384-well plates, and the concentration of amplified plasmid DNA was quantified fluorometrically using PICOGREEN dye (Molecular Probes, Eugene OR) and a FLUOROSKAN II fluorescence scanner (Labsystems Oy, Helsinki, Finland).

III.   Sequencing and Analysis

cDNA sequencing reactions were processed using standard methods or high-throughput

instrumentation such as the ABI CATALYST 800 (Perkin-Elmer) thermal cycler or the PTC-200 thermal

cycler (MJ Research) in conjunction with the HYDRA microdispenser (Robbins Scientific) or the

MICROLAB 2200 liquid transfer system (Hamilton). cDNA sequencing reactions were prepared using

reagents provided by Amersham Pharmacia Biotech or supplied in ABI sequencing kits such as the ABI

5   PRISM BIGDYE Terminator cycle sequencing ready reaction kit (Perkin-Elmer). Electrophoretic

separation of cDNA sequencing reactions and detection of labeled polynucleotides were carried out using

the MEGABACE 1000 DNA sequencing system (Molecular Dynamics); the ABI PRISM 373 or 377

sequencing system (Perkin-Elmer) in conjunction with standard ABI protocols and base calling software;

or other sequence analysis systems known in the art. Reading frames within the cDNA sequences were

10   identified using standard methods (reviewed in Ausubel, 1997, supra, unit 7.7). Some of the cDNA

sequences were selected for extension using the techniques disclosed in Example V.

   The polynucleotide sequences derived from cDNA sequencing were assembled and analyzed

using a combination of software programs which utilize algorithms well known to those skilled in the art.

Table 5 summarizes the tools, programs, and algorithms used and provides applicable descriptions,

15   references, and threshold parameters. The first column of Table 5 shows the tools, programs, and

algorithms used, the second column provides brief descriptions thereof, the third column presents

appropriate references, all of which are incorporated by reference herein in their entirety, and the fourth

column presents, where applicable, the scores, probability values, and other parameters used to evaluate

the strength of a match between two sequences (the higher the score, the greater the homology between

20   two sequences). Sequences were analyzed using MACDNASIS PRO software (Hitachi Software

Engineering, South San Francisco CA) and LASERGENE software (DNASTAR). Polynucleotide and

polypeptide sequence alignments were generated using the default parameters specified by the clustal

algorithm as incorporated into the MEGALIGN multisequence alignment program (DNASTAR), which

also calculates the percent identity between aligned sequences.

25   The polynucleotide sequences were validated by removing vector, linker, and polyA sequences

and by masking ambiguous bases, using algorithms and programs based on BLAST, dynamic

programming, and dinucleotide nearest neighbor analysis. The sequences were then queried against a

selection of public databases such as the GenBank primate, rodent, mammalian, vertebrate, and eukaryote

databases, and BLOCKS using programs based on BLAST, FASTA, and BLIMPS. The sequences were

30   assembled into full length polynucleotide sequences using programs based on Phred, Phrap, and Consed,

and were screened for open reading frames using programs based on GeneMark, BLAST, and FASTA.

The full length polynucleotide sequences were translated to derive the corresponding full length

polypeptide sequences. The polypeptide sequences may be used to query databases such as the

GenBank databases (described above), SwissProt, BLOCKS, PRINTS, Prosite, and Hidden Markov

35   Model (HMM)-based protein family databases such as PFAM. HMM is a probabilistic approach which

analyzes consensus primary structures of gene families. (See, e.g., Eddy, S.R. (1996) Curr. Opin. Str. Biol. 6:361-365.)

The programs described above for the assembly and analysis of full length polynucleotide and amino acid sequences were also used to identify polynucleotide sequence fragments from SEQ ID NO:21-40. Fragments from about 20 to about 4000 nucleotides which are useful in hybridization and amplification technologies were described in The Invention section above.

IV.   Northern Analysis

Northern analysis is a laboratory technique used to detect the presence of a transcript of a gene and involves the hybridization of a labeled nucleotide sequence to a membrane on which RNAs from a particular cell type or tissue have been bound. (See, e.g., Sambrook, supra, ch. 7; Ausubel, 1995, supra, ch. 4 and 16.)

Analogous computer techniques applying BLAST were used to search for identical or related molecules in nucleotide databases such as GenBank or LIFESEQ (Incyte Pharmaceuticals). This analysis is much faster than multiple membrane-based hybridizations. In addition, the sensitivity of the computer search can be modified to determine whether any particular match is categorized as exact or similar. The basis of the search is the product score, which is defined as:

$$\frac{\% \text{ sequence identity x } \% \text{ maximum BLAST score}}{100}$$

The product score takes into account both the degree of similarity between two sequences and the length of the sequence match. For example, with a product score of 40, the match will be exact within a 1% to 2% error, and, with a product score of 70, the match will be exact. Similar molecules are usually identified by selecting those which show product scores between 15 and 40, although lower scores may identify related molecules.

The results of northern analyses are reported as a percentage distribution of libraries in which the transcript encoding FLEXGEM occurred. Analysis involved the categorization of cDNA libraries by organ/tissue and disease. The organ/tissue categories included cardiovascular, dermatologic, developmental, endocrine, gastrointestinal, hematopoietic/immune, musculoskeletal, nervous, reproductive, and urologic. The disease/condition categories included cancer, inflammation/trauma, cell proliferation, neurological, and pooled. For each category, the number of libraries expressing the sequence of interest was counted and divided by the total number of libraries across all categories. Percentage values of tissue-specific and disease- or condition-specific expression are reported in Table 3.

V.   Extension of FLEXGEM Encoding Polynucleotides

The full length nucleic acid sequences of SEQ ID NO:21-40 were produced by extension of an appropriate fragment of the full length molecule using oligonucleotide primers designed from this fragment. One primer was synthesized to initiate 5' extension of the known fragment, and the other primer, to initiate

3' extension of the known fragment. The initial primers were designed using OLIGO 4.06 software (National Biosciences), or another appropriate program, to be about 22 to 30 nucleotides in length, to have a GC content of about 50% or more, and to anneal to the target sequence at temperatures of about 68°C to about 72°C. Any stretch of nucleotides which would result in hairpin structures and primer-primer dimerizations was avoided.

Selected human cDNA libraries were used to extend the sequence. If more than one extension was necessary or desired, additional or nested sets of primers were designed.

High fidelity amplification was obtained by PCR using methods well known in the art. PCR was performed in 96-well plates using the PTC-200 thermal cycler (MJ Research, Inc.). The reaction mix contained DNA template, 200 nmol of each primer, reaction buffer containing Mg^{2+}, $(NH_4)_2SO_4$, and β-mercaptoethanol, Taq DNA polymerase (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech), ELONGASE enzyme (Life Technologies), and Pfu DNA polymerase (Stratagene), with the following parameters for primer pair PCI A and PCI B: Step 1: 94°C, 3 min; Step 2: 94°C, 15 sec; Step 3: 60°C, 1 min; Step 4: 68°C, 2 min; Step 5: Steps 2, 3, and 4 repeated 20 times; Step 6: 68°C, 5 min; Step 7: storage at 4°C. In the alternative, the parameters for primer pair T7 and SK+ were as follows: Step 1: 94°C, 3 min; Step 2: 94°C, 15 sec; Step 3: 57°C, 1 min; Step 4: 68°C, 2 min; Step 5: Steps 2, 3, and 4 repeated 20 times; Step 6: 68°C, 5 min; Step 7: storage at 4°C.

The concentration of DNA in each well was determined by dispensing 100 µl PICOGREEN quantitation reagent (0.25% (v/v) PICOGREEN; Molecular Probes, Eugene OR) dissolved in 1X TE and 0.5 µl of undiluted PCR product into each well of an opaque fluorimeter plate (Corning Costar, Acton MA), allowing the DNA to bind to the reagent. The plate was scanned in a Fluoroskan II (Labsystems Oy, Helsinki, Finland) to measure the fluorescence of the sample and to quantify the concentration of DNA. A 5 μl to 10 μl aliquot of the reaction mixture was analyzed by electrophoresis on a 1 % agarose mini-gel to determine which reactions were successful in extending the sequence.

The extended nucleotides were desalted and concentrated, transferred to 384-well plates, digested with CviJI cholera virus endonuclease (Molecular Biology Research, Madison WI), and sonicated or sheared prior to religation into pUC 18 vector (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). For shotgun sequencing, the digested nucleotides were separated on low concentration (0.6 to 0.8%) agarose gels, fragments were excised, and agar digested with Agar ACE (Promega). Extended clones were religated using T4 ligase (New England Biolabs, Beverly MA) into pUC 18 vector (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech), treated with Pfu DNA polymerase (Stratagene) to fill-in restriction site overhangs, and transfected into competent E. coli cells. Transformed cells were selected on antibiotic-containing media, individual colonies were picked and cultured overnight at 37°C in 384-well plates in LB/2x carb liquid media.

The cells were lysed, and DNA was amplified by PCR using Taq DNA polymerase (Amersham

Pharmacia Biotech) and Pfu DNA polymerase (Stratagene) with the following parameters: Step 1: 94°C, 3 min; Step 2: 94°C, 15 sec; Step 3: 60°C, 1 min; Step 4: 72°C, 2 min; Step 5: steps 2, 3, and 4 repeated 29 times; Step 6: 72°C, 5 min; Step 7: storage at 4°C. DNA was quantified by PICOGREEN reagent (Molecular Probes) as described above. Samples with low DNA recoveries were reamplified using the same conditions as described above. Samples were diluted with 20% dimethysulphoxide (1:2, v/v), and sequenced using DYENAMIC energy transfer sequencing primers and the DYENAMIC DIRECT kit (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech) or the ABI PRISM BIGDYE Terminator cycle sequencing ready reaction kit (Perkin-Elmer).

In like manner, the nucleotide sequences of SEQ ID NO:21-40 are used to obtain 5' regulatory sequences using the procedure above, oligonucleotides designed for such extension, and an appropriate genomic library.

VI. Labeling and Use of Individual Hybridization Probes

Hybridization probes derived from SEQ ID NO:21-40 are employed to screen cDNAs, genomic DNAs, or mRNAs. Although the labeling of oligonucleotides, consisting of about 20 base pairs, is specifically described, essentially the same procedure is used with larger nucleotide fragments. Oligonucleotides are designed using state-of-the-art software such as OLIGO 4.06 software (National Biosciences) and labeled by combining 50 pmol of each oligomer, 250 μCi of [γ-^{32}P] adenosine triphosphate (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech), and T4 polynucleotide kinase (DuPont NEN, Boston MA). The labeled oligonucleotides are substantially purified using a SEPHADEX G-25 superfine size exclusion dextran bead column (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). An aliquot containing 10^7 counts per minute of the labeled probe is used in a typical membrane-based hybridization analysis of human genomic DNA digested with one of the following endonucleases: Ase I, Bgl II, Eco RI, Pst I, Xba1, or Pvu II (DuPont NEN).

The DNA from each digest is fractionated on a 0.7% agarose gel and transferred to nylon membranes (Nytran Plus, Schleicher & Schuell, Durham NH). Hybridization is carried out for 16 hours at 40°C. To remove nonspecific signals, blots are sequentially washed at room temperature under increasingly stringent conditions up to 0.1 x saline sodium citrate and 0.5% sodium dodecyl sulfate. Hybridization patterns are visualized using autoradiography and compared.

VII. Transcript Image Analysis

Transcript images are generated as described in Seilhamer et al., "Comparative Gene Transcript Analysis," U.S. Patent Number 5,840,484, incorporated herein by reference.

VIII. Microarray Analysis

Probe Preparation from Tissue or Cell Samples

Total RNA is isolated from tissue samples using the guanidinium thiocyanate method and polyA$^+$ RNA is purified using the oligo (dT) cellulose method. Each polyA$^+$ RNA sample is reverse transcribed using MMLV reverse-transcriptase, 0.05 pg/μl oligo-dT primer (21mer), 1X first strand buffer, 0.03

units/ul RNase inhibitor, 500 uM dATP, 500 uM dGTP, 500 uM dTTP, 40 uM dCTP, 40 uM dCTP-Cy3 (BDS) or dCTP-Cy5 (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). The reverse transcription reaction is performed in a 25 ml volume containing 200 ng polyA⁺ RNA with GEMBRIGHT kits (Incyte). Specific control polyA⁺ RNAs are synthesized by in vitro transcription from non-coding yeast genomic DNA (W. Lei,

5   unpublished). As quantitative controls, the control mRNAs at 0.002 ng, 0.02 ng, 0.2 ng, and 2 ng are diluted into reverse transcription reaction at ratios of 1:100,000, 1:10,000, 1:1000, 1:100 (w/w) to sample mRNA respectively. The control mRNAs are diluted into reverse transcription reaction at ratios of 1:3, 3:1, 1:10, 10:1, 1:25, 25:1 (w/w) to sample mRNA differential expression patterns. After incubation at 37° C for 2 hr, each reaction sample (one with Cy3 and another with Cy5 labeling) is treated with 2.5 ml of

10 0.5M sodium hydroxide and incubated for 20 minutes at 85° C to the stop the reaction and degrade the RNA. Probes are purified using two successive CHROMA SPIN 30 gel filtration spin columns (CLONTECH Laboratories, Inc. (CLONTECH), Palo Alto CA) and after combining, both reaction samples are ethanol precipitated using 1 ml of glycogen (1 mg/ml), 60 ml sodium acetate, and 300 ml of 100% ethanol. The probe is then dried to completion using a SpeedVAC (Savant Instruments Inc.,

15 Holbrook NY) and resuspended in 14 µl 5X SSC/0.2% SDS.

Microarray Preparation

Sequences of the present invention are used to generate array elements. Each array element is amplified from bacterial cells containing vectors with cloned cDNA inserts. PCR amplification uses primers complementary to the vector sequences flanking the cDNA insert. Array elements are amplified

20 in thirty cycles of PCR from an initial quantity of 1-2 ng to a final quantity greater than 5 µg. Amplified array elements are then purified using SEPHACRYL-400 (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech).

Purified array elements are immobilized on polymer-coated glass slides. Glass microscope slides (Corning) are cleaned by ultrasound in 0.1% SDS and acetone, with extensive distilled water washes between and after treatments. Glass slides are etched in 4% hydrofluoric acid (VWR Scientific Products

25 Corporation (VWR), West Chester, PA), washed extensively in distilled water, and coated with 0.05% aminopropyl silane (Sigma) in 95% ethanol. Coated slides are cured in a 110°C oven.

Array elements are applied to the coated glass substrate using a procedure described in US Patent No. 5,807,522 , incorporated herein by reference. 1 µl of the array element DNA, at an average concentration of 100 ng/ul, is loaded into the open capillary printing element by a high-speed robotic

30 apparatus. The apparatus then deposits about 5 nl of array element sample per slide.

Microarrays are UV-crosslinked using a STRATALINKER UV-crosslinker (Stratagene). Microarrays are washed at room temperature once in 0.2% SDS and three times in distilled water. Non-specific binding sites are blocked by incubation of microarrays in 0.2% casein in phosphate buffered saline (PBS) (Tropix, Inc., Bedford, MA) for 30 minutes at 60° C followed by washes in 0.2% SDS and distilled

35 water as before.

Hybridization

Hybridization reactions contain 9 μl of probe mixture consisting of 0.2 μg each of Cy3 and Cy5 labeled cDNA synthesis products in 5X SSC, 0.2% SDS hybridization buffer. The probe mixture is heated to 65° C for 5 minutes and is aliquoted onto the microarray surface and covered with an 1.8 cm² coverslip.

5 The arrays are transferred to a waterproof chamber having a cavity just slightly larger than a microscope slide. The chamber is kept at 100% humidity internally by the addition of 140 μl of 5x SSC in a corner of the chamber. The chamber containing the arrays is incubated for about 6.5 hours at 60° C. The arrays are washed for 10 min at 45° C in high stringency wash buffer (1X SSC, 0.1% SDS), three times for 10 minutes each at 45° C in low stringency wash buffer (0.1X SSC), and dried.

10 Detection

Reporter-labeled hybridization complexes are detected with a microscope equipped with an Innova 70 mixed gas 10 W laser (Coherent, Inc., Santa Clara CA) capable of generating spectral lines at 488 nm for excitation of Cy3 and at 632 nm for excitation of Cy5. The excitation laser light is focused on the array using a 20X microscope objective (Nikon, Inc., Melville NY). The slide containing the array is

15 placed on a computer-controlled X-Y stage on the microscope and raster-scanned past the objective. The 1.8 cm x 1.8 cm array used in the present example is scanned with a resolution of 20 micrometers.

In two separate scans, a mixed gas multiline laser excites the two fluorophores sequentially. Emitted light is split, based on wavelength, into two photomultiplier tube detectors (PMT R1477, Hamamatsu Photonics Systems, Bridgewater NJ) corresponding to the two fluorophores. Appropriate

20 filters positioned between the array and the photomultiplier tubes are used to filter the signals. The emission maxima of the fluorophores used are 565 nm for Cy3 and 650 nm for Cy5. Each array is typically scanned twice, one scan per fluorophore using the appropriate filters at the laser source, although the apparatus is capable of recording the spectra from both fluorophores simultaneously.

The sensitivity of the scans is typically calibrated using the signal intensity generated by a cDNA

25 control species added to the probe mix at a known concentration. A specific location on the array contains a complementary DNA sequence, allowing the intensity of the signal at that location to be correlated with a weight ratio of hybridizing species of 1:100,000. When two probes from different sources (e.g., representing test and control cells), each labeled with a different fluorophore, are hybridized to a single array for the purpose of identifying genes that are differentially expressed, the calibration is

30 done by labeling samples of the calibrating cDNA with the two fluorophores and adding identical amounts of each to the hybridization mixture.

The output of the photomultiplier tube is digitized using a 12-bit RTI-835H analog-to-digital (A/D) conversion board (Analog Devices, Inc., Norwood, MA) installed in an IBM-compatible PC computer. The digitized data are displayed as an image where the signal intensity is mapped using a linear 20-color

35 transformation to a pseudocolor scale ranging from blue (low signal) to red (high signal). The data is also

analyzed quantitatively. Where two different fluorophores are excited and measured simultaneously, the data are first corrected for optical crosstalk (due to overlapping emission spectra) between the fluorophores using each fluorophore's emission spectrum.

A grid is superimposed over the fluorescence signal image such that the signal from each spot is centered in each element of the grid. The fluorescence signal within each element is then integrated to obtain a numerical value corresponding to the average intensity of the signal. The software used for signal analysis is the GEMTOOLS gene expression analysis program (Incyte).

IX.   Complementary Polynucleotides

Sequences complementary to the FLEXGEM-encoding sequences, or any parts thereof, are used to detect, decrease, or inhibit expression of naturally occurring FLEXGEM. Although use of oligonucleotides comprising from about 15 to 30 base pairs is described, essentially the same procedure is used with smaller or with larger sequence fragments. Appropriate oligonucleotides are designed using OLIGO 4.06 software (National Biosciences) and the coding sequence of FLEXGEM. To inhibit transcription, a complementary oligonucleotide is designed from the most unique 5' sequence and used to prevent promoter binding to the coding sequence. To inhibit translation, a complementary oligonucleotide is designed to prevent ribosomal binding to the FLEXGEM-encoding transcript.

X.   Expression of FLEXGEM

Expression and purification of FLEXGEM is achieved using bacterial or virus-based expression systems. For expression of FLEXGEM in bacteria, cDNA is subcloned into an appropriate vector containing an antibiotic resistance gene and an inducible promoter that directs high levels of cDNA transcription. Examples of such promoters include, but are not limited to, the *trp-lac* (*tac*) hybrid promoter and the T5 or T7 bacteriophage promoter in conjunction with the *lac* operator regulatory element. Recombinant vectors are transformed into suitable bacterial hosts, e.g., BL21(DE3). Antibiotic resistant bacteria express FLEXGEM upon induction with isopropyl beta-D-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG). Expression of FLEXGEM in eukaryotic cells is achieved by infecting insect or mammalian cell lines with recombinant <u>Autographica californica</u> nuclear polyhedrosis virus (AcMNPV), commonly known as baculovirus. The nonessential polyhedrin gene of baculovirus is replaced with cDNA encoding FLEXGEM by either homologous recombination or bacterial-mediated transposition involving transfer plasmid intermediates. Viral infectivity is maintained and the strong polyhedrin promoter drives high levels of cDNA transcription. Recombinant baculovirus is used to infect <u>Spodoptera frugiperda</u> (Sf9) insect cells in most cases, or human hepatocytes, in some cases. Infection of the latter requires additional genetic modifications to baculovirus. (See Engelhard, E. K. et al. (1994) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 91:3224-3227; Sandig, V. et al. (1996) Hum. Gene Ther. 7:1937-1945.)

In most expression systems, FLEXGEM is synthesized as a fusion protein with, e.g., glutathione S-transferase (GST) or a peptide epitope tag, such as FLAG or 6-His, permitting rapid, single-step,

affinity-based purification of recombinant fusion protein from crude cell lysates. GST, a 26-kilodalton enzyme from <u>Schistosoma japonicum</u>, enables the purification of fusion proteins on immobilized glutathione under conditions that maintain protein activity and antigenicity (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). Following purification, the GST moiety can be proteolytically cleaved from FLEXGEM at specifically engineered sites. FLAG, an 8-amino acid peptide, enables immunoaffinity purification using commercially available monoclonal and polyclonal anti-FLAG antibodies (Eastman Kodak). 6-His, a stretch of six consecutive histidine residues, enables purification on metal-chelate resins (QIAGEN). Methods for protein expression and purification are discussed in Ausubel (1995, <u>supra</u>, ch 10 and 16). Purified FLEXGEM obtained by these methods can be used directly in the following activity assay.

XI.   Functional Assays

FLEXGEM function is assessed by expressing the sequences encoding FLEXGEM at physiologically elevated levels in mammalian cell culture systems. cDNA is subcloned into a mammalian expression vector containing a strong promoter that drives high levels of cDNA expression. Vectors of choice include pCMV SPORT (Life Technologies) and pCR3.1 (Invitrogen, Carlsbad CA), both of which contain the cytomegalovirus promoter. 5-10 μg of recombinant vector are transiently transfected into a human cell line, preferably of endothelial or hematopoietic origin, using either liposome formulations or electroporation. 1-2 μg of an additional plasmid containing sequences encoding a marker protein are co-transfected. Expression of a marker protein provides a means to distinguish transfected cells from nontransfected cells and is a reliable predictor of cDNA expression from the recombinant vector. Marker proteins of choice include, e.g., Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP; Clontech), CD64, or a CD64-GFP fusion protein. Flow cytometry (FCM), an automated, laser optics-based technique, is used to identify transfected cells expressing GFP or CD64-GFP and to evaluate the apoptotic state of the cells and other cellular properties. FCM detects and quantifies the uptake of fluorescent molecules that diagnose events preceding or coincident with cell death. These events include changes in nuclear DNA content as measured by staining of DNA with propidium iodide; changes in cell size and granularity as measured by forward light scatter and 90 degree side light scatter; down-regulation of DNA synthesis as measured by decrease in bromodeoxyuridine uptake; alterations in expression of cell surface and intracellular proteins as measured by reactivity with specific antibodies; and alterations in plasma membrane composition as measured by the binding of fluorescein-conjugated Annexin V protein to the cell surface. Methods in flow cytometry are discussed in Ormerod, M. G. (1994) <u>Flow Cytometry</u>, Oxford, New York NY.

The influence of FLEXGEM on gene expression can be assessed using highly purified populations of cells transfected with sequences encoding FLEXGEM and either CD64 or CD64-GFP. CD64 and CD64-GFP are expressed on the surface of transfected cells and bind to conserved regions of human immunoglobulin G (IgG). Transfected cells are efficiently separated from nontransfected cells using magnetic beads coated with either human IgG or antibody against CD64 (DYNAL, Lake Success NY).

mRNA can be purified from the cells using methods well known by those of skill in the art. Expression of mRNA encoding FLEXGEM and other genes of interest can be analyzed by northern analysis or microarray techniques.

XII.   Production of FLEXGEM Specific Antibodies

FLEXGEM substantially purified using polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (PAGE; see, e.g., Harrington, M.G. (1990) Methods Enzymol. 182:488-495), or other purification techniques, is used to immunize rabbits and to produce antibodies using standard protocols.

Alternatively, the FLEXGEM amino acid sequence is analyzed using LASERGENE software (DNASTAR) to determine regions of high immunogenicity, and a corresponding oligopeptide is synthesized and used to raise antibodies by means known to those of skill in the art. Methods for selection of appropriate epitopes, such as those near the C-terminus or in hydrophilic regions are well described in the art. (See, e.g., Ausubel, 1995, supra, ch. 11.)

Typically, oligopeptides 15 residues in length are synthesized using an ABI 431A peptide synthesizer (Perkin-Elmer) using fmoc-chemistry and coupled to KLH (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis MO) by reaction with N-maleimidobenzoyl-N-hydroxysuccinimide ester (MBS) to increase immunogenicity. (See, e.g., Ausubel, 1995, supra.) Rabbits are immunized with the oligopeptide-KLH complex in complete Freund's adjuvant. Resulting antisera are tested for antipeptide activity by, for example, binding the peptide to plastic, blocking with 1% BSA, reacting with rabbit antisera, washing, and reacting with radio-iodinated goat anti-rabbit IgG.

XIII.   Purification of Naturally Occurring FLEXGEM Using Specific Antibodies

Naturally occurring or recombinant FLEXGEM is substantially purified by immunoaffinity chromatography using antibodies specific for FLEXGEM. An immunoaffinity column is constructed by covalently coupling anti-FLEXGEM antibody to an activated chromatographic resin, such as CNBr-activated SEPHAROSE (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). After the coupling, the resin is blocked and washed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Media containing FLEXGEM are passed over the immunoaffinity column, and the column is washed under conditions that allow the preferential absorbance of FLEXGEM (e.g., high ionic strength buffers in the presence of detergent). The column is eluted under conditions that disrupt antibody/FLEXGEM binding (e.g., a buffer of pH 2 to pH 3, or a high concentration of a chaotrope, such as urea or thiocyanate ion), and FLEXGEM is collected.

XIV.   Identification of Molecules Which Interact with FLEXGEM

FLEXGEM, or biologically active fragments thereof, are labeled with [125]I Bolton-Hunter reagent. (See, e.g., Bolton et al. (1973) Biochem. J. 133:529.) Candidate molecules previously arrayed in the wells of a multi-well plate are incubated with the labeled FLEXGEM, washed, and any wells with labeled FLEXGEM complex are assayed. Data obtained using different concentrations of FLEXGEM are used to

calculate values for the number, affinity, and association of FLEXGEM with the candidate molecules.

Alternatively, molecules interacting with FLEXGEM are analyzed using the yeast two-hybrid system as described in Fields, S. and Song, O. (1989) Nature 340:245-246, or using commercially available kits based on the two-hybrid system, such as the MATCHMAKER system (CLONTECH).

5   Various modifications and variations of the described methods and systems of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Although the invention has been described in connection with specific preferred embodiments, it should be understood that the invention as claimed should not be unduly limited to such specific embodiments. Indeed, various modifications of the described modes for carrying out the invention which are obvious to 10   those skilled in molecular biology or related fields are intended to be within the scope of the following claims.